

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

FOUR POEMS OF HÖLDERLIN

THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

by A. J. AYER

NOTES FOR AN ESTIMATE OF PEACOCK

by RONALD MASON

WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN

by DENTON WELCH

SENT BY AMERICA

by CHARLES FLETCHER COOKE

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HORIZON

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COMMENT

THE HORIZON prizes have been won by Arthur Koestler, *Birth of a Myth*, and Sir Osbert Sitwell, *Letter to my Son*. Some hundred and twenty subscribers voted; three points were given to each first choice, two points to each second. Koestler received a hundred points. Sir Osbert forty-five. Then came Peter Quennell, Cecil Beaton, and the Editor, one with thirty-six, the two others with thirty-three, followed by Anna Kavan and C. Day Lewis with twenty-five. It will be seen that Koestler polled twice as many votes as the second prize, while Day Lewis' *O Dreams*, *O Destinations* were the only poems to receive a considerable proportion of votes. While offering warmest congratulations to the winners, and our thanks to the subscribers who voted, HORIZON must remind our readers that under five per cent of our subscribers cast their votes, and that the privilege may be refused them this year. It is illegal to enclose voting forms, lists of contributions, etc., in HORIZON, and so we were unable to make things as easy for the subscribers as we should have liked.

After this month HORIZON will cost two shillings, and subscriptions will be at the rate of twenty-five shillings per annum, and twelve shillings and sixpence for six months. The greatly increased cost of production has made this necessary.

The death of Alun Lewis in India came as a blow to HORIZON and the young literary movement of this country. He contributed two stories to HORIZON: *The Last Inspection* and *The Orange Grove*, and two poems, *All day it has rained* and *The Soldier*, as well as a review of Edward Thomas, whom he greatly admired. He was a most sensitive writer who combined a Celtic imagination with a vigorous socialist outlook. This combination was just beginning to bear fruit, as in *The Orange Grove* and in some of his poems about India, and he looked like becoming that rare and admirable fusion, the imaginative realist who unites 'la délicatesse avec le pouvoir'. He was an essentially poetic character, modest, handsome, warm-hearted, passionately interested in literature, hating injustice, and he was in no way altered by the military machine, except in so far as it increased his love for his fellow men, widened his horizon and developed his sense of satire. His death and that of the brilliant young Greek critic Kapetanakis, are a double loss which the new generation can ill afford.

FOUR POEMS OF

SOKRATES UND ALKIBIADES

'Warum huldigst du, heiliger Sokrates,
Diesem Jünglinge stets? kennst du Grössers nicht,
Warum siehet mit Liebe,
Wie auf Götter, dein Aug' auf ihn?'

Wer das Tiefste gedacht, liebt das Lebendigste
Hohe Tugend versteht, wer in die Welt geblickt,
Und es neigen die Weisen
Oft am Ende zu Schönerm sich.

DA ICH EIN KNABE WAR

Da ich ein Knabe war,
Rettet' ein Gott mich oft
Vom Geschrei und der Ruthe der Menschen,
Da spielt' ich sicher und gut
Mit den Blumen des Hains,
Und die Lüftchen des Himmels
Spielten mit mir.

Und wie du das Herz
Der Pflanzen erfreust,
Wenn sie entgegen dir
Die zarten Arme strecken,
So hast du mein Herz erfreut
Vater Helios! und, wie Endymion,
War ich dein Liebling,
Heilige Luna!

O all ihr treuen,
Freundlichen Götter!
Das ihr wüsstet,
Wie euch meine Seele geliebt!

Zwar damals rief ich noch nicht
Euch mit Nahmen, auch ihr
Nanntet mich nie, wie die Menschen sich nennen,
Als kannten sie sich.

HÖLDERLIN

SOCRATES AND ALCIBIADES

Saintly Socrates, why should you incessantly
Praise this lad? Do you know nothing superior? Why
Does your eye gaze upon him
Lovingly, as upon the gods?

Who most deeply has thought, loves the most living. He
Only values the best who has beheld the world,
And the wise in the end shall
Often turn to the beautiful.

YOUTH

Once when I was a boy
A saviour spared me
From the clamour and violence of men :
And safe and serene I
Played in the flowering grove,
The airs of the heavens
Played over me.

And, just as you gladden
The hearts of the flowers
As they sunward spread their
Delicate arms to you,
So you have gladdened my heart,
Father Helios! And like Endymion
I was your darling,
Heavenly Luna!

O all you faithful
And friendly deities!
If you could only
Know how my spirit adored you!

True, not yet did I call
You by name, nor did you give
Me a name, in the manner that men give
Names, as though they knew one another.

HORIZON

Doch kannt' ich euch besser
 Als ich je die Menschen gekannt,
 Ich verstand die Stille des Athers,
 Der Menschen Worte verstand ich nie.

Mich erzog der Wohllaut
 Des säuselnden Hains
 Und lieben lernt' ich
 Unter den Blumen.

Im Arme der Götter wuchs ich gross.

HYPERIONS SCHIKSALS LIED

Ihr wandelt droben im Licht
 Auf weichem Boden, selige Genien!
 Glänzende Götterlüfte
 Rühren euch leicht,
 Wie die Finger der Künstlerin
 Heilige Saiten.

Schiksallös, wie der schlafende
 Säugling, atmen die Himmlischen;
 Keusch bewahrt
 In bescheidener Knospe,
 Blühet ewig
 Ihnen der Geist,
 Und die seligen Augen
 Blicken in stiller
 Ewiger Klarheit.

Doch uns ist gegeben,
 Auf keiner Stätte zu ruhn,
 Es schwinden, es fallen
 Die leidenden Menschen
 Blindlings von einer
 Stunde zur andern,
 Wie Wasser von Klippe
 Zu Klippe geworfen,
 Jahrlang ins Ungewisse hinab.

Yet I knew you far better
Than I ever knew men;
Stillness of ether I understood,
But the words of men never.

I was raised by the gentle
Murmur of woods
And I learned to love
Among blossoms.

And I grew in the arms of the gods.

Translated by FREDERIC PROKOSCH

HYPERION'S FATE-SONG

You walk up there in the light
On gentle underfoot, holy Genii!
Winds of the gods glittering
Lightly touch you,
Like the fingers of the harpist her
Sacred strings.

Fateless, like the sleeping
Suckling, they breathe, the heavenly ones;
Chastely kept
In the shy bud, spirit
Blooms everlastingly
New in them,
And the holy eyes
Look, in still,
Eternal clearness.

But to us is given
Never on a crevice to rest.
Still vanish, still fall
Men ever suffering
Blindly from one lost
Hour to another,
Like water from rockhead
To rockhead rebounding,
Year-long into the uncertain thrown back.

Translated by VERNON WATKINS

HÄLFTE DES LEBENS

Mit gelben Birnen hängen
Und voll mit wilden Rosen
Das Land in den See,
Ihr holden Schwäne,
Und trunken von Küssen
Tunkt ihr das Haupt
Ins heilignüchterne Wasser.

Weh mir, wo nehm' ich, wenn
Es Winter ist, die Blumen, und wo
Den Sonnenschein
Und Schatten der Erde:
Die Mauern stehn
Sprachlos und kalt, im Winde
Klirren die Fahnen.

WHAT books are read in Germany today? An answer as significant as it is authoritative is found in the Finnish newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet* of 15 November. The newspaper interviewed the general secretary of the so-called Association of European Authors, one of the institutions of the Nazi 'New European Order', and this gentleman, Herr Dr. Carl Rothe of Berlin, gave out some surprising information.

First he made it clear what kind of books Germans are not reading today. Books which have anything to do with the war are 'completely neglected' by both buyers and readers. This is because the war makes itself felt in every sector of daily life, and the public does not wish to be reminded of it also in books. What people do read was a more interesting revelation. They are reading the classics, and among these their favourite is the poet Friedrich Hölderlin, who composed his poems and his one novel some 150 years ago. Hölderlin's works are having a 'sensational revival throughout Germany'. 'They are being very widely read.'

HALF OF LIFE

With yellow pears the land
And thick with wild roses
Hangs in the lake,
You friendly swans,
And drunken with kisses
Dip your heads
In the pious, sobering water.

Ah, grief, where do I take, when
Winter comes, the flowers, and where
The sunshine
And shadows of the Earth:
The walls stand
Speechless and cold, in the wind
Clatter the storm-vanes.

Translated by VERNON WATKINS

Their present popularity is indeed sensational, for as persons with a knowledge of German literature will recall, Hölderlin sought refuge from the turmoil of war and revolution in the early 1800s through a flight into antiquity, into Hellenism. He was the first of those brilliant German intellects who bitterly hated their own country. Hölderlin called the Germans 'calculating barbarians'. 'I tell you there is nothing so sacred that these people do not desecrate and debase it.' 'The virtues of the Germans are but a brilliant curse'—and so on. To quote Stefan Zweig, he poured forth 'the fiercest maledictions a German had ever hurled at his own people'.

[From *The Nation*, December 1943]

Prokosch's translations are from his *Some Poems of Hölderlin* in the Poet of the Month series

A. J. AYER

THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

NOWADAYS a nation is commonly said to be free if it is autonomous, but a free nation in this sense is not necessarily a nation of free men. The elimination of foreign rulers may indeed be regarded as a means towards the acquisition of individual freedom, but the securing of the end remains a practical problem. There is also the theoretical problem of discovering in what this individual freedom consists.

An apparently simple answer to this theoretical question is that a man is free to the extent that he is able to do what he chooses. This indeed is the view that was taken by the utilitarian philosophers, who may be regarded as the spokesmen of nineteenth-century English liberalism. The value that they attached to freedom can thus be represented as a corollary of their belief that the appropriate end of all moral and political action was the promotion of happiness. For they assumed that to allow people the greatest possible measure of individual freedom was equivalent to giving them the fullest opportunity for the satisfaction of their desires; and they supposed that this would lead to the general preponderance of pleasure over pain in which they took happiness to consist. In consequence, they were largely concerned with the ways in which people might make their desires known, and it is partly for this reason that so much importance was attached to freedom of speech and freedom of the Press. Similarly, the pre-occupation with electoral reform may be held to have issued from the belief that a man's political desires were revealed by his exercise of the vote. The same assumption had been made by Rousseau, when he said that the English people was free only at election times, for he was implying that it was only during the course of an election that any means existed by which the ordinary English citizen could effectively express his political will.

It is characteristic of this liberal attitude to government that

it is taken for granted that men can be trusted to know what they themselves desire. But this is by no means a universally accepted axiom. In particular it has been rejected by the numerous political theorists, who, in one way or another, have attempted to draw a distinction between what men think they will and what they really will. Thus Rousseau, who was not a consistent writer, differentiated the general will of a society from the individual wills of its members, and made accordance with the general will the criterion of freedom. As a result, he was able to speak of the criminal who was dragged unwillingly off to execution as being forced to be free. This authoritarian view of freedom was perpetuated by Hegel, who, finding Rousseau's general will to be a somewhat nebulous entity, inasmuch as it was a will which nobody could definitely be said to exercise, gave it an owner in the person of the State. The result is justly described in Russell's malicious dictum that, for the Hegelians, true freedom consists in the right to obey the police. In the same way, the modern apologists for Fascism have been able to claim, not merely that their dictator's subjects enjoyed the benefits of a better government than the citizens of the pluto-democracies, but also that they were more truly free. This is not perhaps a distinctively Christian idea, but it finds its parallel in the religious conception of a deity 'whose service is perfect freedom'. And indeed the theory that the dictator incarnates the real will of the people can easily be made to carry the metaphysical rider that he also exemplifies the will of God.

At first sight, it may seem that these accounts of freedom, which make a man's liberty consist in his complete subservience to some form of authority, are diametrically opposed to the ordinary liberal notion that a man is free to the extent that he is able to be a law unto himself. Whatever advantages may be enjoyed by the inhabitants of a totalitarian State, it would not ordinarily be said that they were conspicuously free; and it would seem more honest for the advocates of this form of government to argue that the attainment of these advantages necessitated some sacrifice of freedom than to maintain the paradox that no such sacrifice occurred at all. It is tempting therefore to dismiss the whole of the authoritarian conception of freedom by saying simply that it is based upon a palpable misuse of language. But this would be to misplace the incidence of the paradox. It is not

necessarily in their definition of freedom that the authoritarians depart from common sense; they might well be prepared to accept the ordinary view that freedom for the individual consists in some form of self-determination. What leads to the paradox is the further assumption which they make that, in surrendering to the will of a superior authority, whether that of God, or the leader, or whatever agents may be concealed by the abstraction of the State, a man is really obeying himself. On this showing, Rousseau's criminal who is forced to be free, is really conveying himself to execution, though he may not be aware of it, and the subject whose actions are completely governed by the decrees of a dictator is not really subordinate to another's will, because, in some mysterious way, the dictator is really the subject in disguise. And while it is in the authoritarian systems that this assumption is carried to the farthest lengths and entails the strangest consequences, it has made its appearance also in democratic theory. Indeed, the very use of the word democracy in its application to a modern State conveys a suggestion of this sort; for it implies that, for a man to be governed by an assembly in the election of which he has the opportunity to participate, is really equivalent to his governing himself.

It is a dictum of G. E. Moore's that, when a philosopher tells you that something is really so and so, what he actually means is that it is not so really; and this is surely an instance in point. For suppose, to take the most favourable case, that I am living in what is now called a democratic country, and that the man for whom I record my vote at an election is returned to parliament as a member of the numerically superior party; suppose even that he then becomes an active promoter of legislation; it is still not true that the acts of the assembly to which he belongs are really my acts. I may approve of these acts, and, generally speaking, I must acquiesce in them, but they are not mine, because it does not depend upon the exercise of my will that they should be either done or forborne. This is not intended to imply that any system in which I did govern myself would be either practicable or desirable. The point is only that it is a piece of chicanery for politicians to tell me that I myself really do govern, when I really do not. The chicanery is still greater in the cases where I am subject to a dictatorship. Here again, it is possible that I approve of the acts of my rulers, and probable that I acquiesce in them,

but neither my acquiescence nor my approval, however fervent, render them my acts. The dictator may happen to reflect my will, but he cannot incarnate it. His actions are not really mine, because it is in no sense I who do them. For the most part they have not even that remote connection with the subject's will that gives to the institution of representative government its claim to be accounted democratic.

I conclude then that the assumption on which the authoritarian view of freedom is based is manifestly false. But independently of this assumption there appears to be nothing to recommend the departure from ordinary usage which is involved in identifying freedom with subjection to authority. Accordingly, we may return to the liberal view that the freedom of the individual is to be measured by his power to do what he himself actually wills. And we may begin by taking it as established that it is a necessary condition of a man's acting freely that he should be doing what he has chosen to do, and as the result of his choosing it; that is to say, it must be true in some sense that he could have acted otherwise if he had chosen. The next question is whether it is also a sufficient condition. If it were, there would be no need to continue the discussion, though the question as to whether it is ever possible to act otherwise than one does raises a separate philosophical problem. The fact is, however, that it is not sufficient.

The reason why it is not is that it takes no account of the factors that govern a man's choice. It is, of course, open to anyone to decide so to use the word freedom that its application depends only upon the occurrence of a process of choice, irrespective of the way in which the choice is determined. But, in the first place, this would not be in accordance with customary usage, which requires that, at least in some cases, a restriction of the field of choice should be regarded as a limitation of freedom. And secondly, it would fail to bring out the actual complexity of the political problem. For the practical aim of those who represent themselves as advocates of greater personal freedom is not merely to remove the hindrances which prevent men from doing what they choose, but also to transform the factors which limit and pervert the nature of their choice.

Among the most important of these factors are poverty and ignorance. It was one of the achievements of Marx that he exposed

the current pretence that men were in a position to act freely, when in fact they were the prisoners of an economic system which put most of the commonly accepted goods of life entirely beyond their reach. It is indeed hard to believe that the utilitarians did not perceive that the freedom of contract, which they sought to establish between workers and employers, was bound to be an illusion so long as one party to the contract was economically at the mercy of the other. Probably they did perceive this, but did not regard it as an objection to their system, because they did not believe that the facts could be altered. They were misled by the theories of Malthus into thinking that the poverty of the mass of the population was the outcome of a natural law, so that to try to mitigate it by social and industrial legislation was futile, if not mischievous. Today, these theories are discredited, but there are still those who object to such modern developments as the interference of the government with private enterprise, or the concession of power to trade unions, on the ground that they put restraints upon individual liberty. And, in the narrow sense in which they conceive the question, these objectors are right. What they ignore, however, is that, without such restraints upon the liberty of some, the liberty of others, who constitute the greater number, would be very much more restricted. In themselves, the facts to which objection is taken are indeed limitations of freedom, but some such limitations are necessary to make a wider enjoyment of freedom possible.

The ground for taking ignorance to be restrictive of freedom is that it causes people to make choices which they would not have made if they had seen what the realization of their choices involved. The distinction, which we have already noticed, between what people think they want and what they really want, is valid if it is taken only as a way of expressing the fact that people do very often desire what actually fails to satisfy them when they obtain it. Their dissatisfaction may arise from the fact that they find the situation which constitutes the fulfilment of their aim to be essentially different from what they had expected; or they may discover too late that the events which they have sought to bring about have natural consequences which are so undesirable from their point of view as to outweigh the value of the events themselves. So long indeed as there is no obvious ground for fixing the responsibility for such errors

elsewhere than on the person who commits them, it would not conventionally be held that his commission of them was incompatible with his acting freely; but it is a different matter when he has clearly been denied the opportunity of acquiring the knowledge which would have saved him from the errors in question. In other words, what is thought to diminish a man's freedom is not so much his actual unenlightenment, as the fact that it appears to issue from the malevolence or neglect of others, or from the operations of the political or economic system under which he lives. The consequence is that, in assessing a man's freedom, it is necessary to take some account of the education which he has received.

At this point, however, the difficulty arises that every system of education is to some degree tendentious. It is impossible to bring up a child without encouraging him, whether intentionally or not, to make some judgments of values; the precept and example of those with whom he is in contact is bound to have some influence, even if it is mainly negative, upon his subsequent interests and tastes. This is a fact that has been strangely neglected by most liberal theorists, who, in supposing that men were rational, have seemed also to assume that they grew up in a moral vacuum. It has not, however, been neglected by the modern exponents of autocratic government. The dictator who claims that he represents the will of his people may eventually be justified, if he takes sufficient care to condition them in such a way that they come to believe and desire only what he thinks it expedient that they should. That this is possible is not indeed a new discovery. The Jesuits, for example, have long been credited with the belief that, if they were allowed to have the control of a child during his early years, he would be theirs for life. But the modern improvements in the technique of propaganda have made the process of conditioning very much more effective and far-reaching. It is perhaps the ultimate refinement of tyranny that the slave is induced to glory in his chains. Neither need the tyranny be in any way maleficent. In a completely planned society, the members of which were trained from birth for their respective functions and who were so thoroughly conditioned that they never conceived any desires but those that were appropriate to their station, the subjects would be perfectly happy; and since they would be granted the ability to satisfy their

desires, they would seem to themselves to be free. But we, surveying the whole system from the outside, would judge, without hesitation, that they were not really free.

To most of us, including those who say that they approve of governmental planning, the picture of such a society is not attractive, and the reason why it is not attractive is precisely that it seems to involve a negation of freedom. But now it may be asked whether it is in this respect essentially different from our own. The difference is that the planned action of a ruling caste is substituted for the largely unplanned action of parents, or nurses, or schoolmasters, or writers, or politicians, or lovers, or friends, but the conditioning is there in either case. Where then are we to draw the line? Our natural tendency is to say that a man chooses freely if the conditions of his choice are relatively obscure and haphazard, and to deny that he is free in proportion as the external influences to which he is subject are manifest and purposive. This is, however, a very vague distinction, besides being arbitrary; and it seems paradoxical that a man's freedom should be measured, not merely by the influences to which he has been subjected, but also by other people's knowledge of them. One might expect that other people's knowledge would enter into the question only in so far as it actually affected the agent, but this appears not to be the case. That a man's own knowledge should be held to be relevant independently of its affecting his actions, is less surprising. Indeed, Spinoza went so far as to identify freedom with awareness of necessity. But this, though a workable definition, runs exactly counter to our normal tendency to regard an action as lacking in freedom if its necessitation is obvious either to others or to the agent himself.

In view of these difficulties, I do not think it possible to give any precise definition of freedom that would correspond at all closely to ordinary usage. This does not mean, however, that there is nothing further to be done in the way of its analysis. For even if there is no rule available for determining that a person is, or is not, unqualifiedly free, it may still be possible to indicate the criteria by which we judge that one person is freer than another. And this, if it can be achieved, is probably as good a solution as the character of the problem admits.

To bring to light what I believe to be the nature of these criteria, I propose to borrow from a theory of probability the

concept of a *spielraum*. In connection with the judgments which we make about freedom, this metaphor of a playing-space can be applied in three ways. For our assessment of a man's freedom may be held to depend first upon the degree to which his *spielraum* is encumbered, secondly upon its extent, and thirdly upon the manner in which its boundaries are fixed. These three criteria are logically independent of one another, and do not always reveal a similar result when they are severally applied to a given case. There appears, however, to be no established rule for giving any one of them the preference over the others in the case where they conflict.

The first of these criteria is the one that is employed when we test a person's freedom by his ability to satisfy his desires. So long as we confine ourselves to this criterion, it does not matter what these desires are, or how they came to be acquired. All that is relevant is the degree to which they succeed in being satisfied. To return to the metaphor, it does not matter how small the *spielraum* is, or what its size depends on; the only test is the ability of its owner to move about it without being checked. It is in this sense that the stoic who is immured in prison can still claim to be free, for he deliberately adapts his movements to the configuration of the *spielraum*; that is, he schools himself to conceive only those desires that his situation permits him to satisfy. It is in this sense also that the ascetic achieves freedom through limiting the range of his desires. It is not the fact that his *spielraum* is small that makes him free, but the fact that, in making it small, he empties it of obstacles; because his desires are few and simple, the ratio of their satisfaction is high. In this particular case, the first of our criteria is reinforced by the third, for the limitation in the *spielraum* is conceived to be the consequence of his own deliberate choice. But, as far as the operation of the first criterion alone is concerned, the result would be the same if the limitation was held to have been forced upon him. The only point to be considered is the actual ratio of satisfaction that he is able to obtain.

The fact that the first criterion tends to favour ascetism brings it, however, into conflict with the second; for the effect of using the second criterion is to establish a positive correlation between the extent of the *spielraum* and the freedom which its owner enjoys. It is by this criterion that most social and economic,

as opposed to penal, legislation is judged to be 'productive of freedom; for, by raising people's standards of living and improving their education, it serves to widen their field of choice. It is true that the effect of amplifying the *spielraum*, is usually to add to the possibilities of its being encumbered, but this is a consideration which is generally disregarded in politics, except by a few romantics, who vainly advocate a return to a more Spartan economy and a simpler way of life. Whether their policy is justifiable or not is here beside the question. The point is that, if freedom is taken as a value, the second of our criteria operates against them. It is in the light of this criterion also that objection is chiefly taken to restrictions upon freedom of speech and the freedom of the Press. For the effect of such restrictions is to limit the *spielraum*, not merely of those who are directly restrained by them, but of the whole public that their utterances would have reached. Furthermore, it may be noted that the factors which limit the *spielraum* are not necessarily external to its owner. Thus, the justification for holding, as Plato did, that a man is not free when he is governed by the passional side of his nature, is that this slavery to his passions excessively restricts his field of choice. In this case, indeed, our first criterion tends to come into play also; for we are more ready to say that such a man is not free if we know that in his cooler hours he entertains desires which his dominant obsessions actually prevent him from satisfying.

There remains the third criterion, which differs from the others in being concerned, not with the character of the *spielraum*, but with its provenance. The ideal of freedom which it presupposes is that a man's choice must depend as little as possible upon external factors, including the will of others, and as much as possible upon himself. It is by this criterion that most of our moral judgments are guided; for, in praising or blaming people for their actions, we tend to make the assumption that they were genuinely responsible for them in a sense which goes beyond the mere fact that they willed to do them. It may, however, be argued that this assumption is irrational, for we are also inclined to think that, if we had sufficient information about the agent's antecedents, we could always find a reason for his acting as he does, and this chain of reasons must eventually carry us to facts which are not in any way attributable to the agent himself.

Even in the case where the ground for blaming a man is that his will is weak or perverted, it seems justifiable to ask why this is so; and, though the man himself may be held to be immediately responsible, he will not appear to be so ultimately if the explanation is sufficiently far pursued. It is for this reason indeed that those who are at all deeply influenced by the work of modern psychologists are disposed to abandon the notion of personal responsibility, at least in its prevalent form, and to put their moral judgments upon a utilitarian basis, if they consciously give them any basis at all. Nevertheless, our third criterion continues to function, at any rate negatively. It still seems paradoxical to say that a man is free if his course of action clearly depends upon decisions which he did not take, or material factors over which he had no control. To return to the example of the scientifically planned society, the reason for judging, as, surely, nearly everyone would, that its members would not be free, is that the whole pattern of their lives would have been antecedently determined, even though they might not be aware of it themselves. If we considered only the first two criteria, we should allow that members of such a society could enjoy a high degree of freedom; for, if the planning were successful, their *spielraum* might be both extensive and unencumbered. It is the influence of the third criterion that turns the scale. No doubt the use of this third criterion is illogical, since it is hard to see how any choice can fail to be somehow conditioned; and it may be that an increased awareness of this will eventually resolve the conflict that now exists between our desire for the advantages of a planned society and our attachment to the idea of freedom. The fact is, however, that the emotions which are based upon the acceptance of the third criterion remain extremely strong; and any faithful analysis of the current conception of freedom is therefore bound to take it into account.

RONALD MASON

NOTES FOR AN ESTIMATE OF PEACOCK

THIS opinionated and Epicurean eccentric has found himself a niche. He is appreciated especially by a cultivated, rather restricted set of readers who find an instinctive response in their temperaments to his dogmatic and often arbitrary assertions. Lawyers read him, liberal clergymen, higher civil servants, the professional classes, the older men of letters. The values that he proclaims satisfy their relaxation very well. He is a bit of a curiosity, an isolated specimen, a writer whom it tickles their fancy to read and their vanity to have read. A little nervous about the form society is to take and the place they are going to take in it, they are very much heartened by the gusto with which Peacock's violent common sense reinforces their innermost articles of faith. He pleases this class immensely, in the same way that Trollope pleases them, by his implicit insistence on the foundations on which they themselves are based, and by his bull-like activities in the china-shop of Idiosyncrasy. They sense in idiosyncrasy a threat to stability; and Peacock's invigorating forthright satire smashes to their satisfaction the idiosyncrasy and the threat. Thus he is read by them appreciatively, not critically. Outside this circle he has no very wide public.

Yet it is undoubtedly worth the effort to break through this crust of prejudice to find out what there is in him besides this protective aggressiveness. Nowadays when critics are apt to seize mercilessly upon a writer's confessed or implied ideology before deciding whether his creative work is to be admitted to criticism or not, it is not so easy as it used to be to disinter the secret of the durability of a man like Peacock from the wreckage of his social or political heresies. It is time we were reminded that neither Peacock nor Trollope have lived so long as they have on the strength of comfortable conservatism alone. There was a period of literary criticism—it is all over now—when books and their authors were judged almost solely on their capacity for

imparting enjoyment. Of this school of critics Saintsbury was the sanest and most appreciative; and if you want to read a full and fair recital of Peacock's richness, his abiding attraction, you will find Saintsbury's introductions to the novels, reprinted in his *Prefaces and Essays*, unequalled in their own class as a benevolent appreciation of the man and his work. A very important job was done by the appreciative school of critics; they whetted the immediate appetites in a way that no access of sophistication has been able to improve on; and the limitation of that school is not that their criticism lacked acuteness or even profundity, but that the standards they set and the methods they employed could not readily take into account just those factors of historical and social relevance that are essential to the adjustment of the author's literary importance. Had he relevance to his age? If so, how? If his age is in any way related to our own, how may he be helpfully aligned to that relation? And so on. Questions of this sort set a figure more solidly in the round, when adequately answered, than any amount of appreciative quotation can do. The appreciative critics provide a very valuable, but only a partial, answer to the general inquisitiveness which we feel about a good writer. Peacock has been well enough served by them; it is time he was examined in a perspective which they did not afford him; and a recent second reading of the novels has suggested to me that the isolation and comparative obscurity in which he exists today is mainly referable to the lack of any serious attempt to discuss him objectively. He has been left to his circle of willing appreciators, a circle which for social and historical reasons is growing narrower. This is a tentative attempt to break out of it.

A salient characteristic of his work will serve as a sign of its inner nature; an inflexible rigidity of style. He did not develop; it is virtually impossible to guess right at the source of any context selected at random from any of his books, so mature was his style at the beginning of his career and so little had it altered at the end. Somebody said of the younger Pitt, 'He never grew, he was cast'. There is about the temperament and work of Peacock this rigidity, as of cast metal; and the other quality of cast iron, brittleness, is perceptibly, though less strongly, implicit in his style. To remain constant for fifty years shows either superhuman application or incorrigible imperviousness to

externals; and considering that he published his first novel, *Headlong Hall*, before Jane Austen died, and his last, *Gryll Grange*, after Bernard Shaw was born, his close adherence to the model he built up for himself can be attributed only to an innate permanent value which change could not affect—unless to a secret obstinacy. (He wrote *Gryll Grange* at 75; and this is at once a wonder and a warning. Sophocles, Shaw, Melville, Landor, Peacock—the list is distinguished but short. Septuagenarians with the *cacoethes scribendi* should study these illustrious examples before going and doing likewise.)

Granted that the stock mould that he kept by him all his life was a formality only, and that we are supposed to be looking beyond formalities—nevertheless we cannot escape the inference that the ideas which were the central dynamic of his creativeness were cast in a stock mould too. Alternatively we could legitimately suspect that there were no ideas, but only a brilliance of original form, many times reproduced. This process has served a good many minor novelists, successful after their kind; did Peacock use spurious methods to kid his way to a reputation which, though not major, is at least illustrious?

It is true enough that what is left of his fame today is not a residue of great creations, separate works of art, but of a personality expressing itself through arbitrary incidental forms. His books are not entities, independent once the navel-string has been severed. We don't say, 'Ah, that reminds me of something in *Nightmare Abbey*', as we might say, 'That reminds me of something in *Esmond*, or *Treasure Island*, or *Moby Dick*, or *Mr. Polly*'. We say instead, 'That reminds me of something in Peacock'. And although that doesn't amount to a final criticism, one way or the other, it cannot help indicating the essential subordination of the work produced to the character of the author producing it. In this way a man may perpetuate character, but not art. And when from this premiss we turn to examine the several novels, it becomes only too evident that the essential individuality, which a single work must have if it is to exist in its own right at all, is present in the temper of his work but absent from the forms in which he expressed that temper. There is none of that dramatic progress from a given point to a given point which is part of the minimum requirement of the novel; and deprived of the *shape* without which separate existence is

not possible, these novels remain random lengths of sample Peacock, and do not amount to art.

This does not, of course, invalidate Peacock; it limits our field of search, that is all, since as a pure novelist we can write him off. It becomes clear that his appreciative readers are appreciating him, not the books he has written. But it would also be misleading to suggest, as I may have seemed to be suggesting, that because his novels are shapeless conventionalities it is his thought alone that makes him worth reading. His peculiar liveliness came from other sources as well as from the philosophical ones. Refer back to the class I have indicated as echoing his sentiments. They are generally impatient of novels of ideas. Henry James, for example, E. M. Forster, Edward Upward, Rex Warner, find little response from them. Using these readers as a touchstone, there must be some quality we can find in Peacock which enables him to transmit his own very definite vitality to them other than through the medium of the interplay of ideas. Take away shape from a novel, take away all but the most conventional plot, and what have you left? With Dickens, at any rate, miraculous characters. With Peacock it is not so easy to give an answer. Good satire needs more than naked ideas, and their effectiveness depends a lot on the sort of flesh and blood they are dressed up in.

It is therefore a little disconcerting to find that Peacock does not push his characters much beyond the type stage. These distinctive but obedient puppets do not vary from book to book, any more than the arbitrary antics through which they are put vary either. For the most part the novels are animated *causeries* prinked out with lively comment; the similarity of most of the titles, *Melincourt*, *Headlong Hall*, *Nightmare Abbey*, *Crotchet Castle*, *Gryll Grange*, reflects inevitably the similarity of theme and treatment. Peacock assembles his characters in a convenient collection under one roof, hustles them as quickly and as often as he can into the presence of food and drink, and simply leaves them to talk. The author retires; each protagonist is permitted to speak under the bare signpost of his name in capitals, and in each speech we find displayed in caricature a different humour. All the old tricks of Jonsonian or Restoration comedy are resurrected, and each character is named and invested with the minimum of individuality required for the exercise of the foible

he is embodying. Foster, Escot and Jenkison in *Headlong Hall* represent the three standards of optimism, pessimism and the complacent halfway conservatism between the two, and none of the three utters a word throughout to conflict with, or even significantly to amplify, the doctrine which is his only source of existence. Furthermore when Peacock extends his satire to individuals rather than to types, the frequency of his success, as in the delicious Flosky caricature of Coleridge in *Nightmare Abbey*, has rather obscured the essential similarity between his use of 'humours' and his use of individual caricature. Escot is the deteriorationist and nothing else, and nobody gains or loses by his deteriorationism; Flosky is Coleridge and nobody else, and nobody gains or loses by his Estesianism. He is in as complete a vacuum as Escot. He performs for our diversion his ordained and patterned idiosyncrasy, and stops when he is turned off. He is funny in his own vacuum, as Escot, more soberly, is funny in his. The tragedy of Peacock's characters is that not one of them ever hears one word that any other one is saying. They are little isolated bits of Peacock himself, or of Peacock's enemies, and they enunciate their forthright monologues, pause for breath, and resume at the correct interval. Nothing that has passed meanwhile interests or affects them. In this they differ from the protagonists in Restoration drama, who are at least aware of the complex convention in which they are employed, are in fact breathlessly anxious to conform to it, like earnest participants in the lancers; and also from characters in such drama as Shaw's, where 'types' who are introduced do at least play an integral part in the development of the play and often end by being seen in the round, contributing idiosyncrasy to the action and deriving independence from the drama. All this is foreign to Peacock; his art lacks this creative integration. His plots do not affect his characters; his characters do not affect his plots. The characters spin independently, on their own individual axes; the stories, such as they are, proceed unobtrusively without them. The development shown in *Gryll Grange*, where the plot is in part managed by the characters themselves, is noteworthy but elementary; and the story by itself would not arrest attention in a women's magazine.

It would be unsound to deduce from this that his characters are not effective or memorable. Many of them are. Scithenyni,

for example, is the only element of life in *The Misfortunes of Elphin* and the only thing apart from *The War Song of Dinas Vawr* that is ultimately worth saving out of that curiously dull book. Magnificently outrageous, he propels himself and the novel he revives into an isolated immortality. He is of Dickensian mould and Peacock either could not or would not duplicate him. He is the only personality Peacock ever invented; for Peacock's other memorable characters startle and please not by their individualities, but by the vigour with which they prosecute their duty, conform to type, vitalize the flat pattern; and, of course, by the volubility of their assertions. Chief among the most successful of the species is the row of eloquent and self-indulgent divines, who have a poor send-off with Dr. Gaster in *Headlong Hall*, but culminate in Folliott and Opimian and are thereby well justified of their preferment. Much of a piece in essentials, they all of them lay down comfortable dogmas, buzz the bottle and quote the late Greek poets; Folliott in *Crotchet Castle* is usually the favourite, but certain pedantries in my constitution have always inclined me to Opimian in *Gryll Grange*. With their Nonnus and their Madeira and their benevolent but implacable Toryism, they form a solid phalanx of pure Peacocks; and delightful as they cannot help being, the value of the creation of such characters is lessened by easy identification with the author.

Peacock was without the enormous vitality that made Dickens' very unevenness memorable, that was able to sustain such comparative failures as Uriah Heep and Mark Tapley into the permanence of household words. Peacock's energy limited itself to wit; and where he managed it best he wrote scenes and paragraphs that Dickens might have signed his name to, like the classic rediscovery of Seithenyn, or a sidelong cynical crack that could have flicked at you out of *Pickwick*:

'... an orphan niece, who had made a runaway love-match with an Irish officer. The lady's fortune disappeared in the first year; love, by a natural consequence, disappeared in the second; the Irishman himself, by a still more natural consequence, disappeared in the third.'

Yet he was not cut out like Dickens to sustain creativeness; and his lesser powers have in greater prominence his lesser imperfections.

It is not his characters, then, or even his types, that give Peacock life; they are too occasional and spasmodic for that. His work, if it were sustained by their presence alone, would be much more uneven than it is; in fact, its quality has a consistency about it that would be remarkable if it were not simple to account for it by the salutary rigour that a real knowledge of the classics imparts to self-criticism. The name of A. E. Housman rises spontaneously as a parallel. A true classical scholar turning to creative work will never, assuming him to have genuine talent, write rubbish. Peacock never did, and that helps to preserve safely all that is valuable in his achievement.

There is only one more way to turn now that his characters have failed us, as they do in all but memorable isolated actions, and that is to the ideas embodied in his books. Here we are on rather more rewarding ground, as a personality emerges; a personality whose positive value, once we can gauge it, will help to measure the validity and extent of his position and influence in literature. The prescription is simple: accept the *dicta* of Peacock's favourite characters as corresponding to his own opinions, and for the rest reckon generally that the more far-fetched and ridiculous he makes a set of postulates appear, the more violently he is opposed to them. Flosky's transcendental obscurantism and that of Mr. Mystic in *Melincourt*, also drawn off Coleridge, Cranium's craniology, Seithenyn's *laissez-faire* conservatism, the toadyism of the particular character in nearly every novel who is intended to represent Southey—all these are contrasted understandably with the more acceptable qualities of Peacock's favourite divines, among whom Friar Michael of *Maid Marian* (that neglected but refreshing exercise in satiric romance) occupies a place less pontifical, not to say parasitical, than his black-coated brethren. The distinctions of doctrine are broad enough to enable us to extract from these contrasts a fairly comprehensive set of conclusions on Peacock's general outlook, and if we set him in the context of his age we can better judge whether that outlook had any constructive result when he translated it into words.

You have to remember that this man lived through one of the most turbulent periods in history and chose to write satire as his expression of his considered opinions. He lived as a conscious contemporary of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars,

the Romantic Revival, the Corn Laws, the Reform Act, Chartism, the Communist Manifesto, the Great Exhibition, the Crimean War, *The Origin of Species*, the rapid development of the internal combustion engine, the Oxford Movement and the first faint suggestions of Pre-Raphaelitism. Of very few of these things does he appear to be aware. Now Jane Austen, writing in the middle of the Napoleonic Wars, was perfectly justified in sticking to her drawing-room so long as she was consistent about it; but Peacock, swivelling a baleful eye on developments in modern society which happened to displease him, laid about him on a national scale while retaining the prejudices and the predilections of a Regency buck like Creevey. And Peacock, who had ten times the learning and ten times the wit of Creevey, and a capacity for satiric and humorous writing that placed him for short passages in the company of Dickens, lost half his value by this stubborn parochialism. It is not difficult to accuse and convict him of deliberate ignorances.

Yet his awareness shows up startlingly at times, like sudden clear patches in fog. Nothing could be better than the election racket in *Melincourt*, where the gentlemanly orang-outang gets safely returned to Parliament; there is a savour of Gilbert in this, and more than a savour of Dickens again. Eatanswill was not conceived for another twenty years, nor the election in *Middlemarch* (whose more rational realism does not blunt its telling effectiveness) for another fifty or so. Peacock was wide awake to the rotten state of the franchise, and in *Melincourt* he ran the topic neatly in harness with a genial bullyragging of Monboddo's surprisingly perceptive theories on the descent of man and Rousseau's commonly misrepresented conception of the noble savage. Sir Oran Haut-ton is a brilliant idea and a deftly managed character, being in fact the brightest spot on Peacock's most tedious novel; and as there is no reason to suppose that Peacock trusted Darwin any further than he trusted Monboddo, we need not chuckle over Peacock's presumptive loss of countenance on the publication of *The Origin of Species*. Again, there could be no neater summary of articulate Toryism, as lively (or as deadly) in the 1820s as in the 1940s, than in Seithenyn's bibulous defence of the policy of the guardians of the embankment in face of the rising floods:

"The parts that are rotten give elasticity to those that are

sound; they give them elasticity, elasticity, elasticity. If it were all sound, it would break by its own obstinate stiffness; the soundness is checked by the rottenness, and the stiffness is balanced by the elasticity. There is nothing so dangerous as innovation. . . . This immortal work has stood for centuries and will stand for centuries more, if we let it alone. It is well; it works well; let well alone. . . . It was half rotten when I was born, and that is a conclusive reason why it should be three parts rotten when I die.'

That is, of course, magnificent; I suppose it has its equal in Falstaff, but not in many other contexts that I can think of. The piercing sanity that could evolve that devastating comment has its obvious application to our far more perilous plight today; and as a parallel piece of clear good sense I would refer you to the doctrines of Mr. Forester in *Melincourt*, who as a character in fiction is an unholy bore, but who seems to represent an earnest and almost crusading seriousness in Peacock that commends him rather to the social reformer than to the lover of satire.

'If in any form of human society any one human being dies of hunger, while another wastes or consumes as much as would have preserved his existence, I hold that second man guilty of the death of the first. . . . What would you think of a family of four persons, two of whom should not be contented with consuming their own share of diurnal provision, but, having adventitiously the pre-eminence of physical power, should either throw the share of the two others into the fire, or stew it down into a condiment for their own?' •

Here are the beginnings of a healthy critical disgust with what at that time was only just about to be called capitalism. Forester is an example of the solitary and sincere crusader who, endowed with a little more vision and a little more conscientious indignation than the next man, becomes a burden to his fellows through his martyr-like insistence on carrying through his theories to a practical conclusion. It led him in *Melincourt* to eschew slave-produced sugar and to inaugurate the rather misleadingly named Anti-Saccharine Fête—activities paralleled by the efforts of Brailsford and Nevinson in their persuasive onslaught on the cocoa trade in 1908; it might have led him a century or so later to the uncompromising community-life of the pacifist who weaves his own clothes out of his own sheep's wool rather than

align himself with a profit-making and war-waging society. Given the change in contexts, it is not too far-fetched to see in Forester the sign that Peacock had a glimmering of the ghastly alternative facing the modern sensitive mind—kill or die; and in the light of our experience Forester's sugarless tea is as noble and futile as the renunciation of ration-books by his modern successors.

But Peacock did not pursue the transitory gleam; he retired among his favourite wines, weighing his postulates blandly over the beakers and not sparing anyone whose eccentricity jarred upon him. Canning is flagellated, but so is Brougham; the man who wished to return to medievalism gets a gentle beating, but the progress of scientific invention, represented especially by the energies of steam, gets one too, and not so gentle. He wastes on the barren question of paper-money nearly as much paper as was consumed by the misuse he complained of; and anyone who showed himself a connoisseur of claret or the classics was all that Peacock could desire. At times he seems to be using his admirable clarity of expression, his forthright inimitable critical prose, to gratify a splenetic whim engendered by over-indulgence. He hits, and hits hard, not for the reason that the object of his attack has offended against any canon of taste or morals, but because it has happened in the eccentricity of his own mood to annoy him personally. The manifestly unfair attacks on Southey and Wordsworth, and one ill-tempered reference to Burke, are representative examples of this habit. His invective never fails to entertain, but it lapses from the standard of good satire.

For the value of a good satirist is akin to the value of a good critic; it depends on more than his insight or his power of expressing that insight. It varies in the ratio of the consistency of his central critical creed. 'He who frees criticism from the moral duty of placing itself in the service of a general, recognized and pursued life-task is treading the path that leads to nihilism and anarchy.' I feel this to be broadly true, though perhaps a little heavily expressed, and no less true because it happens to be by Hitler and meant in a rather specialized sense in the context in which he used it. Hitler insists on the subordination of critical honesty to a central policy; whereas I am stressing the co-ordination of critical insight with philosophical or moral standards. Criticism without a central set of values is not valuable criticism;

it is as worthless as the armament of a battleship without anchor or steering-gear. Peacock wallowed in the heavy seas of the nineteenth century, his magnificent guns superbly manned and mounted. To port lay the fleet of progress, to starboard the fleet of reaction; and so irresponsible was the steering of this formidable vessel that when it let off a broadside it was a toss-up which of the opposing fleets took the weight of it. The models from whom in large part his form and effectiveness were derived, Aristophanes, Lucian, Marmontel and Voltaire, all possessed a central control foreign to Peacock's quicksilver temper, and the damage done by the satire of at least three of these was all the deadlier for the uncompromising consistency of their standards. By their side, and especially by Voltaire's, Peacock is an easy-going old reactionary with a hot temper and a talent for expressing it: he is not favoured by the comparison.

So his ideas do not give him the 'shape' we are looking for, any more than his creation of character or plot did. It is not easy, looking round, to see why he is any more than an attractive story-teller. There is, indeed, a genuine and rather moving consistency and beauty in the expression of his love for the various types of English scenery—the Thames in *Crotchet Castle*, the Lake District in *Melincourt*, the Fens in *Nightmare Abbey*, Wales almost everywhere, the New Forest in *Gryll Grange*; and the bitter note at the beginning of this last book on the subject of enclosures is echoed more than once in other parts of his work not discussed here, and is typical of this real enlightenment in him. There is, of course, one outstanding factor that assists his permanence out of all proportion to his narrative or persuasive ability—his style. It is classic. His immense erudition in Latin and Greek studies had ingrained in him a fastidiousness which was a sure shaper of as clean and clear a prose as his century can offer us. By comparison Macaulay is repetitive and turgid, even Newman frigid and remote; the involved excitabilities of Ruskin and Carlyle are hot air beside him, the classical artificiality of Pater as shallow as the romantic artificiality of Stevenson. His satiric temper, like Voltaire's before him, ground his style to a fine edge. It has orotundities and, as cannot easily be avoided when a classic treats a romantic subject, flatnesses at unexpected places where the emotional intensity required by the context puts too great a strain on the emotional vocabulary at his command—contrast his

treatment of wild Nature with his son-in-law Meredith's: the comparison is valuable as it aligns Peacock conspicuously with the eighteenth century, and invests him with a sculptured dignity which gives Meredith with all his red-blooded romanticism the air of an upstart crow, even although he has succeeded where Peacock has failed. And failure and all, Peacock's style is an admirable weapon; and often it is more than a weapon; it is, in the same way as Sterne's, a verbal embodiment of a personality. Firm, trenchant, economical, it accommodates itself to all moods and carries with it into all of them its pervading satiric essence. This gives it an immunity from bathos and bombast alike, and at times an irresistible humour. The strength and precision of his characters' assertions are frequently the chief origins of the characters' life; which is a clear example of how a style formed primarily for criticism can in the process become truly creative. This style has several notable modern descendants; Shaw is not unreminiscent of it even when he is most like Shaw; Belloc at his more pontifical (consciously pontifical, I mean, and hence very slightly self-satirical, as in *The Path to Rome* and *The Four Men*) provides startlingly faithful echoes. A number of our older moderns, revolting in the flush of youth from the crushing incubus of the three-decker, snatched with enthusiasm at Peacock's novel-form and gave it an exhilarating renewal of life. The gap had been partly bridged by Mallock's *New Republic*, but this had been even more of a retreat from the novel than Peacock's; the newer writers sought to manipulate their ideas within the conversation-piece framework and yet to retain the imaginative quality inherent in the novel. Generally they failed; but *South Wind*, *Crome Yellow* and *Those Barren Leaves* were incidental justifications of the attempt.

The style goes for much, then; but it cannot prolong a man's value into succeeding generations with nothing to back it. And it is because I believe Peacock to be of real value, and not so much because I believe him to have gained at the enthusiastic hands of Saintsbury and Priestley more than his due of praise, that I believe it time for a reassessment of him. Entertainment value must not be under-rated, and he has that in full enough measure. We shan't come to much harm if we read him simply for fun, although we shall then lay ourselves open to the danger of swallowing him whole, as even Saintsbury did, for the sake of the

taste of the jam round the satiric pill. I have sought to show that his abiding value is neither creative nor truly critical, since his characters are not fully formed, his central purpose neither constructive nor consistent, and his satire irregularly aimed; he is Mr. Facing-both-ways, and today when he who is not for us is keenly suspected of being against us, Mr. Facing-both-ways is on unsafe ground. Yet there is one salutary quality in his satire: it is, if absorbed warily, a splendid corrective. Classical to the core, he steered his middle course throughout. Retrogressive reaction he bullied until it was over-ruled, hot-headed idealism he pricked until it burst. He was a man who hated extremes, and while it is not easy to see in these days whether anything but a considered extremism will ever infuse the necessary recreative faith into a collapsed society, it will be well for the hot-heads to correct themselves in mid-venture with a dose of this thermostatic humour of which Peacock is so efficient and delightful a provider. To regard his aggravating inconsistencies in this light may help us to come to easier terms with this excellent minor novelist. The restricted circle who read him now will, I hope, continue to do so; but I hope, too, that they will be joined by others whose critical discrimination will examine his satire against a wider background and his importance in relation to deeper and more enduring values; and it will be these who will come in time to give him his due.

DENTON WELCH

WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN

WHEN I was thirteen, I went to Switzerland for the Christmas holidays in the charge of my eldest brother, who was at that time still up at Oxford.

In the hotel we found another undergraduate whom my brother knew. His name was Archer. They were not at the same college, but they had met and evidently had not agreed with each other. At first my brother William would say nothing about Archer; then one day, in answer to a question of mine, he said: 'He's not very much liked; although he's a very good swimmer'.

As he spoke, William held his lips in a very firm, almost pursed, line which was most damaging to Archer.

After this I began to look at Archer with a certain amount of interest. He had broad shoulders but was not tall. He had a look of strength and solidity which I admired and envied. He had rather a nice pug face with insignificant nose and broad cheeks. Sometimes, when he was animated, a tassel of fair, almost colourless, hair would fall across his forehead, half covering one eye. He had a thick beautiful neck, rather meaty barbarian hands, and a skin as smooth and evenly coloured as a pink fondant.

His whole body appeared to be suffused with this gentle pink colour. He never wore proper ski-ing clothes of waterproof material like the rest of us. Usually he came out in nothing but a pair of grey flannels and a white cotton shirt with all the buttons left undone. When the sun grew very hot, he would even discard this thin shirt, and ski up and down the slopes behind the hotel in nothing but his trousers. I had often seen him fall down in this half-naked state and get buried in snow. The next moment he would jerk himself to his feet again, laughing and swearing.

After William's curt nod to him on our first evening at the hotel, we had hardly exchanged any remarks. We sometimes passed one another on the way to the basement to get our skis in the morning, and often we found ourselves sitting near Archer on the glassed-in terrace; but some Oxford snobbery I knew nothing of, or some more profound reason, always made William throw off waves of hostility. Archer never showed any signs of wishing to approach. He was content to look at me sometimes with a mild inoffensive curiosity, but he seemed to ignore William completely. This pleased me more than I would have admitted at that time. I was so used to being passed over myself by all William's friends, that it was pleasant when someone who knew him seemed to take a sort of interest, however slight and amused, in me.

William was often away from the hotel for days and nights together, going for expeditions with guides and other friends. He would never take me because he said I was too young and had not enough stamina. He said that I would fall down a crevasse or get my nose frost-bitten, or hang up the party by lagging behind.

In consequence I was often alone at the hotel; but I did not

mind this; I enjoyed it. I was slightly afraid of my brother William and found life very much easier and less exacting when he was not there. I think other people in the hotel thought that I looked lonely. Strangers would often come up and talk to me and smile, and once a nice absurd Belgian woman, dressed from head to foot in a babyish suit of fluffy orange knitted wool, held out a bright five-franc piece to me and told me to go and buy chocolate caramels with it. I think she must have taken me for a much younger child.

On one of these afternoons when I had come in from the Nursery Slopes and was sitting alone over my tea on the sun-terrace, I noticed that Archer was sitting in the corner huddled over a book and munching greedily and absent-mindedly.

I, too, was reading a book, while I ate delicious rum-babas and little tarts filled with worm-castles of chestnut purée topped with caps of whipped cream. I have called the meal tea, but what I was drinking was not tea but chocolate. When I poured out, I held the pot high in the air, so that my cup, when filled, should be covered in a rich froth of bubbles.

The book I was reading was Tolstoy's *Resurrection*. Although I did not quite understand some parts of it, it gave me intense pleasure to read it while I ate the rich cakes and drank the frothy chocolate. I thought it a noble and terrible story, but I was worried and mystified by the words 'illegitimate child' which had occurred several times lately. What sort of child could this be? Clearly a child that brought trouble and difficulty. Could it have some terrible disease, or was it a special sort of imbecile? I looked up from my book, still wondering about this phrase 'illegitimate child', and saw that Archer had turned in his creaking wicker chair and was gazing blankly in my direction. The orchestra was playing 'The Birth of the Blues' in a rather remarkable Swiss arrangement, and it was clear that Archer had been distracted from his book by the music, only to be lulled into a day-dream, as he gazed into space.

Suddenly his eyes lost their blank look and focused on my face. 'Your brother off up to the Jungfrau Joch again, or somewhere?' he called out.

I nodded my head, saying nothing, becoming slightly confused.

Archer grinned. He seemed to find me amusing.

'What are you reading?' he asked.

'This,' I said, taking my book over to him. I did not want to call out either the word 'Resurrection' or 'Tolstoy'. But Archer did not make fun of me for reading a 'classic', as most of William's friends would have done. He only said: 'I should think it's rather good. Mine's frightful; it's called *The Story of My Life*, by Queen Marie of Roumania.' He held the book up and I saw an extraordinary photograph of a lady who looked like a snake-charmer in full regalia. The head-dress seemed to be made of white satin, embroidered with beads, stretched over cardboard. There were tassels and trailing things hanging down everywhere.

I laughed at the amusing picture and Archer went on: 'I always read books like this when I can get them. Last week I had Lady Oxford's autobiography, and before that I found a perfectly wonderful book called *Flaming Sex*. It was by a French woman who married an English knight and then went back to France to shoot a French doctor. She didn't kill him, of course, but she was sent to prison, where she had a very interesting time with the nuns who looked after her in the hospital. I also lately found an old book by a Crown Princess of Saxony who ended up picnicking on a haystack with a simple Italian gentleman in a straw hat. I love these "real life" stories, don't you?'

I again nodded my head, not altogether daring to venture on a spoken answer. I wondered whether to go back to my own table or whether to pluck up courage and ask Archer what an 'illegitimate child' was. He solved the problem by saying 'Sit down' rather abruptly.

I subsided next to him with 'Tolstoy' on my knee. I waited for a moment and then plunged.

'What exactly does "illegitimate child" mean?' I asked rather breathlessly.

'Outside the law—when two people have a child although they're not married.'

'Oh.' I went bright pink. I thought Archer must be wrong. I still believed that it was quite impossible to have a child unless one was married. The very fact of being married produced the child. I had a vague idea that some particularly reckless people attempted, without being married, to have children in places called 'night clubs', but they were always unsuccessful, and this made them drink, and plunge into the most hectic gaiety.

I did not tell Archer that I thought he had made a mistake,

for I did not want to hurt his feelings. I went on sitting at his table and, although he turned his eyes back to his book and went on reading, I knew that he was friendly.

After some time he looked up again and said: 'Would you like to come out with me tomorrow? We could take our lunch, go up the mountain and then ski down in the afternoon.'

I was delighted at the suggestion, but also a little alarmed at my own shortcomings. I thought it my duty to explain that I was not a very good skier, only a moderate one, and that I could only do stem turns. I hated the thought of being a drag on Archer.

'I expect you're much better than I am. I'm always falling down or crashing into something,' he answered.

It was all arranged. We were to meet early, soon after six, as Archer wanted to go to the highest station on the mountain railway and then climb on skis to a nearby peak which had a small rest-house of logs.

I went to bed very excited, thankful that William was away on a long expedition. I lay under my enormous feather-bed eiderdown, felt the freezing mountain air on my face, and saw the stars sparkling through the open window.

I got up very early in the morning and put on my most sober ski socks and woollen shirt, for I felt that Archer disliked any suspicion of bright colours or dressing-up. I made my appearance as workmanlike as possible, and then went down to breakfast.

I ate several crackly rolls, which I spread thickly with dewy slivers of butter and gobbets of rich black cherry jam; then I drank my last cup of coffee and went to wax my skis. As I passed through the hall I picked up my picnic lunch in its neat grease-proof paper packet.

The nails in my boots slid and then caught on the snow, trodden hard down to the basement door. I found my skis in their rack, took them down and then heated the iron and the wax. I loved spreading the hot black wax smoothly on the white wood. Soon they were both done beautifully.

I will go like a bird, I thought.

I looked up and saw Archer standing in the doorway.

'I hope you haven't put too much on, else you'll be sitting on your arse all day,' he said gaily.

How fresh and pink he looked! I was excited.

He started to wax his own skis. When they were finished, we

went outside and strapped them on. Archer carried a rucksack and he told me to put my lunch and my spare sweater into it.

We started off down the gentle slopes to the station. The sun was shining prickingly. The lovely snow had rainbow colours in it. I was so happy I swung my sticks with their steel points and basket ends. I even tried to show off, and jumped a little terrace which I knew well. Nevertheless it nearly brought me down. I just regained my balance in time. I would have hated at that moment to have fallen down in front of Archer.

When we got to the station we found a compartment to ourselves. It was still early. Gently we were pulled up the mountain, past the water station stop and the other three halts.

We got out at the very top where the railway ended. A huge unused snow-plough stood by the side of the track, with its vicious shark's nose pointed at me. We ran to the van to get out our skis. Archer found mine as well as his own and slung both pairs across his shoulders. He looked like a very tough Jesus carrying two crosses, I thought.

We stood by the old snow-plough and slipped on our skis; then we began to climb laboriously up the ridge to the wooden rest-house. We hardly talked at all, for we needed all our breath, and also, I was still shy of Archer. Sometimes he helped me, telling me where to place my skis, and, if I slipped backwards, hauling on the rope which he had half playfully tied round my waist.

In spite of growing tired, I enjoyed the grim plodding. It gave me a sense of work and purpose. When Archer looked round to smile at me, his pink face was slippery with sweat. His white shirt above the small rucksack was plastered to his shoulder-blades. On my own face I could feel the drops of sweat just being held back by my eyebrows. I would wipe my hand across my upper lip and break all the tiny beads that had formed there.

Every now and then Archer would stop. We would put our skis sideways on the track and rest, leaning forward on our sticks. The sun struck down on our necks with a steady seeping heat and the light striking up from the snow was as bright as the fiery dazzle of a mirror. From the ridge we could see down into two valleys; and standing all round us were the other peaks, black rock and white snow, tangling and mixing until the mountains looked like vast teeth which had begun to decay.

I was so tired when we reached the long gentle incline to the

rest-house that I was afraid of falling down. The rope was still round my waist, and so the slightest lagging would have been perceptible to Archer. I think he must have slackened his pace for my benefit, for I somehow managed to reach the iron seats in front of the hut. I sank down, still with my skis on. I half shut my eyes. From walking so long with my feet turned out, my ankles felt almost broken.

The next thing I knew was that Archer had disappeared into the rest-house. He came out carrying a steaming cup.

'You must drink this,' he said, holding out black coffee to me, which I hated. He unwrapped four lumps of sugar and dropped them in the cup.

'I don't like it black,' I said.

'Never mind,' he answered sharply, 'drink it'.

Rather surprised, I began to drink the syrupy coffee. 'The sugar and the strong coffee will be good for you,' said Archer. He went back into the rest-house and brought out a glass of what looked like hot water with a piece of lemon floating in it. The mountain of sugar at the bottom was melting into thin Arabian Nights wreaths and spirals, smoke-rings of syrup.

'What else has it got in it?' I asked, with an attempt at worldliness.

'Rum!' said Archer.

We sat there on the terrace and unwrapped our picnic lunches. We both had two rolls, one with tongue in it, and one with ham, a hard-boiled egg, sweet biscuits, and a bar of delicious bitter chocolate; tangerine oranges were our dessert.

We began to take huge bites out of our rolls. We could not talk for some time. The food brought out a thousand times more clearly the beauty of the mountain peaks and sun. My tiredness made me thrillingly conscious of delight and satisfaction. I wanted to sit there with Archer for a long time.

At the end of the meal Archer gave me a piece of his own bar of chocolate, and then began to skin pigs of tangerine very skilfully and hand them to me on his outstretched palm, as one offers a lump of sugar to a horse. I thought for one moment of bending down my head and licking the pigs up in imitation of a horse; then I saw how mad it would look.

We threw the brilliant tangerine peel into the snow, which immediately seemed to dim and darken its colour.

Archer felt in his hip pocket and brought out black, cheap Swiss cigarettes, wrapped in leaf. They were out of a slot machine. He put one between my lips and lighted it. I felt extremely conscious of the thing jutting out from my lips. I wondered if I would betray my ignorance by not breathing the smoke in and out correctly. I turned my head a little away from Archer and experimented. It seemed easy if one did not breathe too deeply. It was wonderful to be really smoking with Archer. He treated me just like a man.

'Come on, let's get cracking,' he said, 'or, if anything happens, we'll be out all night.'

I scrambled to my feet at once and snapped the clips of the skis round my boot heels. Archer was in high spirits from the rum. He ran on his skis along the flat ridge in front of the rest-house and then fell down.

'Serves me right,' he said. He shook the snow off and we started properly. In five minutes we had swooped down the ridge we had climbed so painfully all morning. The snow was perfect; new and dry with no crust. We followed a new way which Archer had discovered. The ground was uneven with dips and curves. Often we were out of sight of each other. When we came to the icy path through a wood, my courage failed me.

'Stem like hell and don't get out of control,' Archer yelled back at me. I pointed my skis together, praying that they would not cross. I leant on my sticks, digging their metal points into the compressed snow. Twice I fell, though not badly.

'Well done, well done!' shouted Archer, as I shot past him and out of the wood into a thick snowdrift. He hauled me out of the snow and stood me on my feet, beating me all over hastily to get off the snow, then we began the descent of a field called the 'Bumps'. Little hillocks, if manoeuvred successfully, gave one that thrilling sinking and rising feeling experienced on a scenic railway at a fun fair.

Archer went before me, dipping and rising, shouting and yelling in his exuberance. I followed more sedately. We both fell several times, but in that not unpleasant, bouncing way which brings you to your feet again almost at once.

Archer was roaring now and trying to yodel in an absurd, rich contralto.

I had never enjoyed myself quite so much before. I thought

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him the most wonderful companion, not a bit intimidating, in spite of being rather a hero.

When at last we swooped down to the village street, it was nearly evening. Early orange lights were shining in the shop windows. We planked our skis down on the hard, iced road, trying not to slip.

I looked in at the *patisserie*, *confiserie* window, where all the electric bulbs had fluffy pink shades like powder-puffs. Archer saw my look.

'Let's go in,' he said. He ordered me hot chocolate with whipped cream, and *croissant* rolls. Afterwards we both went up to the little counter and chose cakes. I had one shaped like a little log. It was made of soft chocolate, and had green moss trimmings made in pistachio nut. When Archer went to pay the bill he bought me some chocolate caramels, in a little birds-eye maple box, and a bar labelled '*Chocolat Polychrome*'. Each finger was a different-coloured cream: mauve, pink, green, yellow, orange, brown, white, even blue.

We went out into the village street and began to climb up the path to the hotel. About half-way up Archer stopped outside a little wooden chalet and said: 'This is where I hang out'.

'But you're staying at the hotel,' I said incredulously.

'Oh yes, I have all my meals there, but I sleep here. It's a sort of little annex when there aren't any rooms left in the hotel. It's only got two rooms; I've paid just a bit more and got it all to myself. Someone comes every morning and makes the bed and stokes the boiler and the stove. Come in and see it.'

I followed Archer up the outside wooden staircase and stood with him on the little landing outside the two rooms. The place seemed wonderfully warm and dry. The walls were unpainted wood; there were double windows. There was a gentle creaking in all the joints of the wood when one moved. Archer pushed open one of the doors and ushered me in. I saw in one corner a huge white porcelain stove, the sort I had only before seen in pictures. Some of Archer's ski-ing gloves and socks were drying round it on a ledge. Against another wall were two beds, like wooden troughs built into the wall. The balloon-like quilts bulged up above the wood.

'I hardly use the other room,' said Archer. 'I just throw my muck into it and leave my trunks there.' He opened the connecting

door and I saw a smaller room with dirty clothes strewn on the floor; white shirts, hard evening collars, some very short pants, and many pairs of thick grey socks. The room smelt mildly of Archer's old sweat. I didn't mind at all.

Archer shut the door and said: 'I'm going to run the bath'.

'Have you a bathroom too—all your own?' I exclaimed enviously. 'Every time anyone has a bath at the hotel, he has to pay two francs fifty to the fraulein before she unlocks the door. I've only had two proper baths since I've been here. I don't think it matters though. It seems almost impossible to get really dirty in Switzerland, and you can always wash all over in your bedroom basin.'

'Why don't you have a bath here after me? The water's lovely and hot, although there's not much of it. If you went back first and got your evening clothes, you could change straight into them.'

I looked at Archer a little uncertainly. I longed to soak in hot water after my wonderful but gruelling day.

'Could I really bath here?' I asked.

'If you don't mind using my water. I'll promise not to pee in it. I'm not really filthy you know.'

Archer laughed and chuckled, because he saw me turning red at his coarseness. He lit another of his peasant cigarettes and began to unlace his boots. He got me to pull them off. I knelt down, bowed my head and pulled. When the ski boot suddenly flew off, my nose dipped forward and I smelt Archer's foot in its woolly, hairy, humid casing of sock.

'Would you just rub my foot and leg?' Archer said urgently, a look of pain suddenly shooting across his face. 'I've got cramp. It often comes on at the end of the day.'

He shot his leg out rigidly and told me where to rub and massage. I felt each of his curled toes separately and the hard tendons in his leg. His calf was like a firm sponge ball. His thigh, swelling out, amazed me. I likened it in my mind to the trumpet of some musical instrument. I went on rubbing methodically. I was able to feel his pain melting away.

When the tense look had quite left his face, he said, 'Thanks', and stood up. He unbuttoned his trousers, let them fall to the ground, and pulled his shirt up. Speaking to me with his head imprisoned in it, he said: 'You go and get your clothes and I'll begin bathing.'

I left him and hurried up to the hotel, carrying my skis on my shoulder. I ran up to my room and pulled my evening clothes out of the wardrobe. The dinner jacket and trousers had belonged to my brother William six years before, when he was my age. I was secretly ashamed of this fact, and had taken my brother's name from the inside of the breast pocket and had written my own in elaborate lettering.

I took my comb, face flannel and soap, and getting out my toboggan slid back to Archer's chalet in a few minutes. I let myself in and heard Archer splashing. The little hall was full of steam and I saw Archer's shoulders and arms like a pink smudge through the open bathroom door.

'Come and scrub my back,' he yelled; 'it gives me a lovely feeling.' He thrust a large stiff nailbrush into my hands and told me to scrub as hard as I could.

I ran it up and down his back until I'd made harsh red tramlines. Delicious tremors seemed to be passing through Archer.

'Ah! go on!' said Archer in a dream, like a purring cat. 'When I'm rich I'll have a special back-scratcher slave.' I went on industriously scrubbing his back till I was afraid that I would rub the skin off. I liked to give him pleasure.

At last he stood up all dripping and said: 'Now it's your turn.'

I undressed and got into Archer's opaque, soapy water. I lay back and wallowed. Archer poured some very smelly salts on to my stomach. One crystal stuck in my navel and tickled and grated against me.

'This whiff ought to cover up all remaining traces of me!' Archer laughed.

'What's the smell supposed to be?' I asked, brushing the crystals off my stomach into the water, and playing with the one that lodged so snugly in my navel.

'Russian pine,' said Archer, shutting his eyes ecstatically and making inbreathing dreamy noises. He rubbed himself roughly with the towel and made his hair stand up on end.

I wanted to soak in the bath for hours, but it was already getting late, and so I had to hurry.

Archer saw what difficulty I had in tying my tie. He came up to me and said: 'Let me do it.' I turned round relieved, but slightly ashamed of being incompetent.

I kept very still, and he tied it tightly and rapidly with his ham-like hands. He gave the bows a little expert jerk and pat. His eyes had a very concentrated, almost crossed look and I felt him breathing down on my face. All down the front our bodies touched featherily; little points of warmth came together. The hard boiled shirts were like slightly warmed dinner-plates.

When I had brushed my hair, we left the chalet and began to walk up the path to the hotel. The beaten snow was so slippery, now that we were shod only in patent leather slippers, that we kept sliding backwards. I threw out my arms, laughing, and shouting to Archer to rescue me; then, when he grabbed me and started to haul me to him, he too would begin to slip. It was a still, Prussian-blue night with rather weak stars. Our laughter seemed to ring across the valley, to hit the mountains and then to travel on and on and on.

We reached the hotel a little the worse for wear. The soles of my patent-leather shoes had become soaked, and there was snow on my trousers. Through bending forward, the studs in Archer's shirt had burst undone, and the slab of hair hung over one of his eyes as I had noticed before. We went into the cloak-room to readjust ourselves; then we entered the dining-room.

'Come and sit at my table,' Archer said; then he added:

'No, we'll sit at yours, as there are two places there already.'

We sat down and began to eat Roman *gnocchi*. (The proprietor of the hotel was Italian-Swiss.) I did not like mine very much and was glad when I could go on to *œufs au beurre noir*. Now that my brother was away I could pick and choose in this way, leaving out the meat course, if I chose to, without causing any comment.

Archer drank Pilsner and suggested that I should too. Not wanting to disagree with him, I nodded my head, although I hated the pale, yellow, bitter water.

After the meal Archer ordered me *crème de menthe* with my coffee; I had seen a nearby lady drinking this pretty liquid and asked him about it. To be ordered a liqueur in all seriousness was a thrilling moment for me. I sipped the fummy peppermint, which left such an artificial heat in my throat and chest, and thought that apart from my mother who was dead, I had never liked anyone so much as I liked Archer. He didn't try to interfere with me at all. He just took me as I was and yet seemed to like me.

Archer was now smoking a proper cigar, not the leaf-rolled cigarettes we had had at lunch-time. He offered me one too, but I had the sense to realize that he did not mean me to take one and smoke it there before the eyes of all the hotel. I knew also that it would have made me sick, for my father had given me a cigar when I was eleven, in an attempt to put me off smoking for ever.

I always associated cigars with middle-aged men, and I watched Archer interestedly, thinking how funny the stiff fat thing looked sticking out of his young mouth.

We were sitting on the uncurtained sun-terrace, looking out on to the snow in the night; the moon was just beginning to rise. It made the snow glitter suddenly, like fish-scales. Behind us people were dancing in the salon and adjoining rooms. The music came to us in angry snatches, some notes distorted, others quite obliterated. Archer did not seem to want to dance. He seemed content to sit with me in silence.

Near me on a what-not stand stood a high-heeled slipper made of china. I took it down and slipped my hand into it. How hideously ugly the china pom-poms were down the front! The painted centipede climbing up the red heel wore a knowing, human expression. I moved my fingers in the china shoe, pretending they were toes.

'I love monstrosities, too,' said Archer, as I put the shoe back beside the fern in its crinkly paper-covered pot.

Later we wandered to the buffet bar and stood there drinking many glasses of the *limonade* which was made with white wine. I took the tinkly pieces of ice into my mouth and sucked them, trying to cool myself a little. Blood seemed to rise in my face; my head buzzed.

Suddenly I felt full of *limonade* and lager. I left Archer to go to the cloak-room, but he followed and stood beside me in the next china niche, while the water flushed and gushed importantly in the polished copper tubes, and an interesting, curious smell came from the wire basket which held some strange disinfectant crystals. Archer stood so quietly and guardingly beside me there that I had to say:

'Do I look queer?'

'No, you don't look queer; you look nice,' he said simply.

A rush of surprise and pleasure made me hotter still. We clanked over the tiles and left the cloak-room.

In the hall, I remembered that I had left all my ski-ing clothes at the chalet.

‘I shall need them in the morning,’ I said to Archer.

‘Let’s go down there now, then I can make cocoa on my spirit-lamp, and you can bring the clothes back with you.’

We set out in the moonlight; Archer soon took my arm, for he saw that I was drunk, and the path was more slippery than ever. Archer sang *Stille Nacht* in German, and I began to cry. I could not stop myself. It was such a delight to cry in the moonlight with Archer singing my favourite song; and William far away up the mountain.

Suddenly we both sat down on our behinds with a thump. There was a jarring pain at the bottom of my spine but I began to laugh wildly; so did Archer. We lay there laughing, the snow melting under us and soaking through the seats of our trousers and the shoulders of our jackets.

Archer pulled me to my feet and dusted me down with hard slaps. My teeth grated together each time he slapped me. He saw that I was becoming more and more drunk in the freezing air. He propelled me along to the chalet, more or less frog-marching me in an expert fashion. I was quite content to leave myself in his hands.

When he got me upstairs, he put me into one of the bunks and told me to rest. The feathers ballooned out round me. I sank down deliciously. I felt as if I were floating down some magic staircase for ever.

Archer got his little meta-stove out and made coffee—not cocoa as he had said. He brought me over a strong cup and held it to my lips. I drank it unthinkingly and not tasting it, doing it only because he told me to.

When he took the cup away, my head fell back on the pillow, and I felt myself sinking and floating away again. I was on skis this time, but they were liquid skis, made of melted glass, and the snow was glass too, but a sort of glass that was springy, like gelatine, and flowing like water.

I felt a change in the light, and knew that Archer was bending over me. Very quietly he took off my shoes, undid my tie, loosened the collar and unbuttoned my braces in front. I remembered thinking, before I finally fell asleep, how clever he was to know about undoing the braces; they had begun to feel so tight

pulling down on my shoulders and dragging the trousers up between my legs. Archer covered me with several blankets and another quilt.

When I woke in the morning, Archer was already up. He had made me some tea and had put it on the stove to keep warm. He brought it over to me and I sat up. I felt ill, rather sick. I remembered what a glorious day yesterday had been, and thought how extraordinary it was that I had not slept in my own bed at the hotel, but in Archer's room, in my clothes.

I looked at him shamefacedly. 'What happened last night? I felt peculiar,' I said.

'The lager and the lemonade, and the *crème de menthe* made you a bit tight, I'm afraid,' Archer said, laughing.

'Do you feel better now? We'll go up to the hotel and have breakfast soon.'

I got up and washed and changed into my ski-ing clothes. I still felt rather sick. I made my evening clothes into a neat bundle and tied them on to my toboggan. I had the sweets Archer had given me in my pocket.

We went up to the hotel, dragging the toboggan behind us.

And there on the doorstep we met William with one of the guides. They had had to return early, because someone in the party had broken a ski.

William was in a temper. He looked at us and then said to me: 'What have you been doing?'

I was at a loss to know what to answer. The very sight of William had so troubled me that this added difficulty of explaining my actions was too much for me.

I looked at him miserably and mouthed something about going in to have breakfast.

William turned to Archer fiercely, but said nothing.

Archer explained: 'Your brother's just been down to my place. We went ski-ing together yesterday and he left some clothes at the chalet.'

'It's very early,' was all William said; then he swept me on into the hotel before him, without another word to the guide or to Archer.

He went with me up to my room and saw that the bed had not been slept in.

I said clumsily: 'The maid must have been in and done my

room early'. I could not bear to explain to William about my wonderful day, or why I had slept at the chalet.

William was so furious that he took no more notice of my weak explanations and lies.

When I suddenly said in desperation, 'I feel sick,' he seized me, took me to the basin, forced his fingers down my throat and struck me on the back till a yellow cascade of vomit gushed out of my mouth. My eyes were filled with stinging water; I was trembling. I ran the water in the basin madly, to wash away this sign of shame.

Gradually I grew a little more composed. I felt better, after being sick, and William had stopped swearing at me. I filled the basin with freezing water and dipped my face into it. The icy feel seemed to bite round my eye-sockets and make the flesh round my nose firm again. I waited, holding my breath for as long as possible.

Suddenly my head was pushed down and held. I felt William's hard fingers digging into my neck. He was hitting me now with a slipper, beating my buttocks and my back with slashing strokes, hitting a different place each time, as he had been taught as a prefect at school, so that the flesh should not be numbed from a previous blow.

I felt that I was going to choke. I could not breathe under the water, and realized that I would die. I was seized with such a panic that I wrenched myself free from William and darted round the room, with him after me. Water dripped on the bed, the carpet, the chest of drawers. Splashes of it spat against the mirror in the wardrobe door. William aimed vicious blows at me until he had driven me into a corner. There he beat against my uplifted arms, yelling in a hoarse, mad, religious voice: 'Bastard, Devil, Harlot, Sod!'

As I cowered under his blows, I remember thinking that my brother had suddenly become a lunatic and was talking gibberish in his madness, for, of the words he was using, I had not heard any before, except 'Devil'.

CHARLES FLETCHER COOKE

SENT BY AMERICA

THE verb 'to send' has taken on another meaning. Mr. Frank Sinatra, the singer, 'sends' ten million Americans twice a week. The idiom may be used in the passive. Instead of swearing that 'Frankie sure can send', one of his audience may simply announce 'I have been sent'.

This example should be enough to indicate the new meaning of the verb. Obviously, it derives from the German *senden*, to transmit. It implies in the sender a power of inducing in the victim a complete acceptance, overwhelming all rational criticism. There can be no analysis, no debate. Whether Sinatra has a better voice than Crosby is not in point, and no one who was sent by either would even argue it.

Its use is not confined to singing. After Sinatra, Mr. Churchill can send better than anyone. Mr. Roosevelt can send, but not as well as Mr. Churchill. No one knows whether General MacArthur can send. Mr. Willkie once had the power. About the only disqualification possessed by Governor Dewey is that he cannot send at all. So important is the gift that it may yet undo the sterling Governor.

It seems as though the concept can be expanded very widely. Not only individuals, but nations can or cannot send. Indeed, in passing judgments on foreign countries, individuals show themselves childishly susceptible to this peculiar power. For example, quite a disproportionate number of your readers have been sent by France. On the other hand, it would be an understatement to say that America did not send your contributor, Mr. Antony Bourne. His impressions, beautifully described, boil down to two small facts. New York he found expensive and Los Angeles crackpot. These truths have been ascertained before. But since the omission of other, more important truths amounts to a *suggestio falsi*, and since it is imperative for the fair name of this journal that Americans should see him answered, common honesty demands an early admission from this writer that in six short weeks America sent him more completely and more unreservedly than anyone except apparently Mr. Hilary Saunders.

This is not the boast it sounds. There is no merit or demerit in sending or in being sent. But it is more blessed to be sent than not. A biographer who loves his hero, a traveller whose journey is a pilgrimage, a critic with a prejudice in favour of his subject, these are more likely to find the truth than those disposed the other way. Therefore, while the lesson taught me about England by America will sound exaggerated and not particularly original, it should contain a greater degree of valuable truth than any discovered by the luckless Mr. Bourne.

But already conviction is fading. The vague, strong blanket of London, 'the symphony in grey and black', who was shown up on return for what she is really worth, namely a symphony in dirt and more dirt, has now almost smothered it, just as she obscures all her children and all her visitors, particularly the American soldiery. (Nothing could be less American than those sad, shy, shifty, distinctly shoddy types to be seen about the streets of guilty London.)

The lesson, if it can be remembered, took the form of a protest against the neglect of a certain fundamental value in England today. We seem to have lost our admiration for constructive achievement. The public figures that excite interest are not those who create, produce or invent, but rather those who arrange the equitable distribution of what others have created. Put more sententiously, the sense of order prevails over the sense of wonder. When I was in America, one of the great public heroes was the discoverer of the drug penicillin, a doctor who works in this city of London. At that time, very few of his compatriots had even heard of him. Since then, some of our inventors of secret weapons have received considerable ephemeral publicity, but nothing comparable to the sustained recognition accorded to such 'distributors' as Sir William Beveridge or such critics of human affairs as Dr. Summerskill or the Brains Trust. In America, the outputs of the Kaiser shipyards or of the Willow Run aircraft factories are topics of passion. Here, it would be the price of the products that attracted attention. In any discussion of post-war reconstruction, questions of land compensation prevail over those of land development, and both take up far more time than any consideration of an export trade, without which there will be nothing for anyone. As for the normal commercial enterprises of this country, upon whose energy and courage we still depend,

they are never noticed until they make an undue profit or break the criminal law.

This was not always so. Why is it now? Does it matter? If yea, what's to be done?

The difference between England and America in this regard goes very deep, is wrapped up with many emotional overtones, and forms only one phenomenon of an obvious, hackneyed truth. After all allowance has been made for climatic, legal, racial and other variations, it is revealed as a simple duel between Youth and Age, *but not* in the sense that as a nation America is only two centuries old. Let it be clearly understood that that is not the difference. The 'young' country is no longer young, as countries go.

Professor Brogan has pointed out that the American political system is today one of the oldest in the world, having suffered no such fundamental changes as affected ours in the nineteenth century.

The crux lies in the different age relationships within the two countries. The proportion of old people to young in England must be unique in the world. Whatever the statistics may show—and one has only to look round any public place to be sure that they bear this out—the extent to which the old chill the intellectual and emotional climate of this country is something quite unknown in America, or indeed anywhere in the world except perhaps in parts of Central Asia.

It is terrifying, this shaping of our values by the old. Old men know too much. They have had the affection bruised from them. They hate being fooled. Their experience disposes them to reject, rather than accept. They want to be soothed with familiar routine. Everything strange is potentially bad. They will pay danegeld to avoid it. It is the origin of *l'esprit de l'épicier*, and very strong. There is no way of appeal, because their judgment is too good. It is impossible to 'send' them, because all passion is spent.

This attitude pervades English life. It accounts for most of the misunderstandings across the Atlantic. It is largely responsible for removing our sense of wonder at mere achievement. And its further products are multiplying every day. Let us mark down some of the other things that, by the domination of our values, the old men have done to us.

They have killed our sense of curiosity. 'Vulgar' curiosity. They have killed what was once a typically British quality, a mixture of bounding and chuckling, best described as larkiness. Above all, they have deprived us of the power to express or even to feel that universal affection towards all human beings, that halo of welcome that has radiated through Americans from Whitman onwards.

In place of our former ebullient joys, they have bestowed upon us judgment, discrimination, taste. These are great gifts. But they are the sauce of life, not the staff. If you live on sauce alone, you grow enfeebled; observe what is occurring in the field of letters, under the dread worship of Taste. Unadulterated, the Cult of Taste narrows human experience. It is very prevalent in England, and very pleasant, giving its priests the lift of a superior wisdom. But in practice it atrophies the powers of creation, because it terrifies the aspirant. Today, there is no sin so shaming as that of bad taste. Of the novels or plays of the last decade written in English, how many of any originality or value have been written by Englishmen? Only those whose value lies in satire. Eugene O'Neill, Koestler, Steinbeck, Marquand, are all 'foreigners'. May this not be because the exercise of criticism is peculiarly attractive to young Englishmen, and because, as a consequence of such unnatural competition, critical standards fly so very high?

A serious by-product of the Cult of Taste is its effect on Anglo-American relations themselves. The English shrivel up before American exuberance and sentiment. They cannot accept the indulgence in death-bed scenes, pert children or flowered neckwear.

But a shrivelled-up Englishman is no use to an American at all. It is difficult to persuade the English of this. If they realize at all that they are shrivelling, they lay a flattering unction to their soul. The Americans like the English that way, they say. Restraint, gravity, a weighty silence, these are what are expected of us.

The defence is worthless. Any American will tell you the truth, later in the evening, if you will let him. Such confidences are common, and very enjoyable. The American loathes the shrivelling process, taking it with justice as a rebuff, almost an insult. He meets an Englishman for the first time, openly disposed, anxious to have a talk, probably an argument. To argue

is to pay a compliment. The American voice grows loud, perhaps, and very slow. At once, the English hackles rise. Why? Partly distaste, partly fear, largely habit. The American, full of charm and courtesy, will laugh and move off, with a wound inside him. Often this sad little scene will occur through one very abject cause. It is not widely appreciated that most Americans find the greatest difficulty in understanding what the English are saying. Our speech is fast and swallowed. Again and again, combined committees founder on this rock. The Englishman states his case. The American is prepared to accept it, but having a serious and thorough approach, wants to probe it for a while. He puts up objections. The Englishman, knowing he is bad in argument, mumbles his reply, which is not properly heard by the American, who is too polite to ask for repetition. The consequences are hideous—misunderstandings, hurt feelings, pride on both sides, ending at the best in a blazing row, but more often in a limp, hopeless silence, breeding a progressive distrust.

If the vocabulary of praise and blame is applicable at all, then it is the English who are at fault in this matter. In any case, on other more fundamental grounds, it would be good for us to grow less critical and less judicious for a while, but if this sweeping programme is not acceptable *in toto*, let us at least make an effort to communicate in their own idiom with those who want to communicate with us. For the strong, silent Englishman in America carries no weight. He is no longer admired even as a curio. The admiration, and more important, the affection, goes to two figures, not conspicuous for their discretion or restraint, but remarkable for qualities more active and more endearing, Mr. Churchill and General Montgomery. At the other extreme, the British politician who is most disliked and most distrusted is not Lord Simon, nor even Mr. Neville Chamberlain, but the Prime Minister who was so cautious that he sealed his lips. And of the lesser fry, it is significant that the most successful representatives we have sent to Washington have been three particularly loquacious Fellows of All Souls.

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It is only too easy for discussion on the difference between America and England to run away with itself. By an elliptical

process of the mind, the two countries become symbols of all the duellists of history—Wild Romanticism versus Classical Decorum, Hedonism versus Puritanism, Pelagians versus Manichees, Frederick Stupor Mundi versus Pope Gregory IX. The extensions can grow larger and more and more inaccurate. It is therefore necessary to return to the limited object of this article, which was to complain against the current failure of Englishmen to give constructive achievement its due recognition.

Many defences of the English attitude can be heard, but only three are worth rebutting. The first is usually advanced by the elderly Left. They identify an admiration for creation and achievement with the American worship of financial success. Any scheme of values by which the virtues of construction are elevated above those of criticism unconsciously savours of sympathy with exploitation, *laissez-faire* economics and selfish, gangster morals. Rather than this wickedness, they attend to the virtuous subject of old age pensions. Here they are joined by an indeterminate horde of modern quietists, who positively dislike achievement and point with ill-concealed admiration to some primitive tribe, the darling of the anthropologists, wherein to be distinguished in any way was the greatest social sin. (Where is that tribe today?)

In fact, there is no essential connection between capitalism and an admiration for achievement. The abhorred 'profit motive' is not a *sine qua non*. The heroes put before the Soviet peoples for their admiration are the builders of a dam, the navigators of the north-east passage, and the hewers of a record cut of coal. The pensioner's friend, that scion of Westminster, seems to be very small beer in the Socialist State.

If we take the capitalist on his own ground, the United States of America, we can already detect the same distinction between an admiration for achievement and regard for the pecuniary advantages it brings. It is true that, by and large, money means more to Americans than it does to us. This, however, is by no means because they are greedier, more indulgent or more miserly than we are, but because money has been the only measure of achievement. The latter value has been the real goal, and the former only the token. This can be tested under the changed conditions of today. Multitudes of business men are

working in the government bureaux, either in uniform or *en civil*. The fixed nature of their salaries in no way reduces their endeavour and enthusiasm, their determination to achieve the best, and their willingness to die of overwork in the attempt. Work is a challenge to their manhood. Perhaps this ethos sprang originally from the 'profit motive', but today it exists quite independently. To have built sixty-three aircraft-carriers in one year is something that will gratify the men in the bureaux as much as the contractors concerned.

The second defence of the English attitude is more sophisticated. It originates, I believe, in the brains of the Whig dons who write for the Sunday papers, and runs along these lines. In the family of nations, each has its special contribution to make. France will offer the Visual Arts, Germany the Music, America the Constructive Energy, Britain the Sense of Justice between Man and Man, etc. etc. The rôle of Russia remains rather obscure, but anyhow, she will specialize in something. It ill becomes any nation to desert its *métier* and poach on the preserve of another. As with the dreadful economics of autarchy, this will provoke a small-scale, out-of-date competition in one's own speciality from the nation sinned against.

This is a beautiful, smooth approach, and quite ridiculous. The Whig don is inflicting on the present the same schematism, lofty, moral, short and false, that he has imposed for too long on the processes of history. There is so much wrong with the theory that it baffles attack. As a prophecy, much less as a guide, it signifies nothing. Perhaps the don may glimpse its irrelevance if he asks himself whether there is the slightest chance within the next century of America bringing her lawsuits to be tried by English judges or of England employing exclusively American contractors to build her roads.

The Whig don was worth mentioning because he finds echoes of unconscious sympathy in many British breasts. 'Let England to herself be true,' they murmur to themselves as they read of race riots in Detroit. Such smug meanness is nothing but that provincial security with which we used to taunt the French. It could not be more false to England. Since when has England ceased to be Merrie, ceased to count the world well lost for Love, Ambition and Adventure? Since 1918. Certainly no earlier. What was left of Youth was tired, too tired to struggle

against the *damnosa hæreditas* of the old. They had earned the slippers in front of the fire.

The third defence is the cleverest of the three. It is usually put forward by a Civil Servant. He denies that it is necessary to admire achievement in order to achieve. He dislikes the commotion surrounding American effort. He probably became a Civil Servant because he disliked commotion.

'You can't really think,' he exclaims, 'that the average American is more efficient than the average Englishman?' We do not, not yet. If the comparison is reduced to the unitary method, in any 'given' hour the Englishman will probably have 'produced' more than the average American. The former has been better educated, and has learnt to economize his energy. But this is beside the point. The American works for more hours than the Englishman. *In toto* he produces much more. He is gradually overcoming his disadvantages, whereas we, thanks to our dislike of commotion, are not facing up to ours. His zest is such that he works harder and plays harder. 'And dies in the early fifties', retorts the Civil Servant. The reader will have already appreciated that I cannot regard it as the ultimate sin to die in the early fifties.

The Civil Servant has, however, helped us by raising the question, 'Does our indifference to constructive achievement matter?'

It matters primarily because it sets a fashion, because it determines what sort of careers receive the most acclaim, and therefore what sort of careers the brightest boys will choose. In the post-war world, the careers they are liable to choose will not help England very much. We lived on accumulated fat for so long that the accumulation of further fat became uninteresting. The *entrepreneurs* lost face, and the critics went ahead. Now that we have run through our fat, our values should once more be changing. But they are not, because they are conditioned by those who grew up on fat. This time-lag is very serious. We still bow down before the purely critical mind. We are in danger of producing more and more first-class judges, who will find themselves with less and less to judge.

Besides carrying this fundamental vice, the dead hand of age also infects our future in an oblique sense, one which is not so flippant as it sounds at first. It is responsible for the dullness that

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spoils some of our most admirable institutions, two in particular, the British Empire and the British Labour Party. However little it may signify morally, dullness is a political disaster, a vice almost as bad in its effects as corruption, tyranny or bloodshed. The first modern dictator, and the most dramatic, Louis Napoleon, drew his keenest support from those who had been bored by the umbrella monarchy. Dictators have been receiving that sort of support ever since. The young will not sit down for ever under the boredom generated by the old, however high the moral purpose. They will go where there is more 'cooking', more 'up', more 'afoot'. As the age content of the Parliamentary Labour Party grows higher and higher, so will its appeal grow inevitably less. This will be a very great pity, because its supplanter is likely to be much less worthy.

That this sort of political dullness is caused by the old can be shown from another example from the British political scene. One of its liveliest forces is the National Farmers' Union. The aims and methods of the N.F.U. may be reprehensible, but not its greatest foe could accuse it of being dull. Can it be a coincidence that the Union's highest officers are usually in the thirties or early forties? What other national body of comparable importance can show leaders under fifty-five?

Two Cabinet Ministers, both in their sixties, recently appealed for no 'public acrimony' in post-war politics. What is wrong with acrimony, if you are young and healthy? Of course, if you are not looking much beyond another decade, it must seem an ungrateful burden, when you are very tired, to stand up to public criticism. But taking a longer view of the health of this nation, such an unnatural peace would be mortal. The human spirit demands a degree of ferment. What figure would England cut today if Dryden had not torn Shaftesbury to shreds, if Junius had not dethroned Warren Hastings, if Byron had not pulverised the Edinburgh Reviewers or Swinburne the followers of the Pale Galilean? Perhaps the two Cabinet Ministers would prefer to have their grandchildren raised in the calm of Lhasa?

The acrimony of American politics is said to be very distasteful to Englishmen of this ilk, but surprisingly enough they take an enormous interest in it. The London newspapers all carry daily columns describing the flashing scene in Washington. A great

number of influential people are trying to visit the United States during Election year.

Can the same testimonial be given to the British Empire? Do we find our Colonies as absorbing as America, as South America or even as interesting as other peoples' Colonies? We cannot deceive ourselves. We do not. A dullness spreads over the Empire like a shroud. This is a serious charge, not merely a regret. For when the great emigrations begin after the war, in the era when nations will be competing for human labour instead of rejecting it, the best emigrants will choose those lands which appear to offer a life with more adoining than that provided by the avuncular rule of the Colonial Office. That rule has been about the kindest the world could have hoped for, but kindness and justice are not enough. If it is to survive, it must abandon the cult of the backward and the unobtrusive, by which it hopes to avoid criticism, in favour of a positive policy designed to challenge it.

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If it be true, as alleged, that our nation is being smothered by a too easy acceptance of old men's values, can anything be done to rid us of this incubus? The prospect is very black. The trend of the population appears to be ineluctable. We shall all be old soon, and there will be more of us and fewer of our successors. In the years that remain before the arteries harden, most of our contemporaries will have been worn out by a second great war, in no mood for fundamental protests of this order, bound even firmer than their fathers by *l'esprit de l'épicier*, anxious only to preserve the little that is left.

If, nevertheless, there shall arise some brave souls, not bludgeoned by exhaustion into acceptance, they will find their task much harder than it would be if they could begin today. For today, we can point to the shining example in America of the power that this spirit of endeavour can release. Consider the phenomenon of her war effort. In two years, she has raised, equipped and despatched enormous navies, armies and air forces to every theatre of operations. She has supplied her allies with ships, food, and the most elaborate munitions. That she has at the same time preserved almost intact her high standard of living is not, as the silly Puritans among us would have it, a detraction

from this stupendous effort, but rather its crowning glory. (When you hear the elderly British nattering about the Americans, there is usually a basis of Puritan envy in the tone—'they haven't *felt* the war at all'—as if discomfort were a virtue.)

The great endeavour is ill-reported by the British correspondents. They know their market well enough to deal mainly with the rivalries, recriminations and extravagance which constitute the inevitable obverse of the medal. But the American attitude towards the job, which alone has made it possible, has seized the imagination of many young people in the British forces, and might have proved both the rival and the lodestar for a resurgence of British endeavour.

Unfortunately, at the time when this should operate, namely when the war is well won, America is likely to undergo a depression of such depth, accompanied by political and social turmoil so prodigious that our wiseacres will turn on us with a triumphant 'I told you so. This is what comes of over-exertion. Let us rejoice in our measured way of life.'

Americans are very conscious of the domestic dangers that lie waiting for them beyond the Peace. Maybe this very awareness will prevent her violent stresses breaking into civil strife. But even if it should fail to do so, there is no doubt that America is great enough to afford the penalty of being so great. The price of liberty is not only eternal vigilance, but periods of muddle, poverty and bloodshed. America will emerge from her ordeal stronger, wiser, more sensitive, even more interesting. But for a little while, she will not be very comfortable, and the Black International of the Old will secretly rejoice.

H. S. WILLIAMSON

CERI RICHARDS

A GLANCE through past criticism is a warning to the contemporary critic. Not that it is a record of woeful misjudgment. As the great figures have emerged, one by one, there has never been lacking the discerning critic whose instinctive reaction has foreshadowed general acceptance. In contrast with intuition, however, the actual verbal criticism has often been remarkable for an astonishing misdirection, as if the critic, modestly fearing to deliver an *ex cathedra* statement (to which, in his heart, he must have known his infallible judgment entitled him), sought any extra-æsthetic argument, moral, metaphysical or pseudo-scientific which might appear to rationalize his verdict. Of these, the pseudo-scientific argument has for long been the favourite. Not even yet can we see Impressionist achievement quite free from obscurantist 'science'. Meditating on the researches of one Chevreul, the Impressionists were said to have found that the device of pointillism produced a new degree of luminosity. This fallacy was repeated from generation to generation. Half an hour's practical experiment or a rapid comparison with a good Cuyp would have disproved it. Thirty or forty years after Seurat's death, a more original critic pointed out that Seurat's doctrinaire technique had little concern with luminosity, but rather ensured an extraordinarily fine control over gradation. Then as now, there was innate conviction of the standing of Seurat as artist. Only with the passage of time have the misleading props disappeared.

Today a quite unprecedented verbal barrage surrounds the Surrealists, but one must not be thereby deflected from what is happening in the heart of the citadel. Let there be no prejudice because the paranoiac Parnassus seems so exiguously peopled by Hieronymus Bosch, John Martin and Mrs. Radcliffe, or because the works of its confessed adherents are at present unconvincing, or even silly. The kiss floating in the sky can no more easily be incorporated in graphic design than the sound of the Osculatory Machine enter into the formal structure of music. But remembering that Cézanne was greater than the Impressionists, yet owed

them an incalculable debt, the fertilizing power of Surrealism too may be incalculable. Looking back to Impressionist and Cubist disintegration, it is clear that Surrealism has re-focused attention on the object, and looking forwards, that it is making the entirely new and perhaps risky experiment of consciously exploiting the unconscious. It is safer, however, in the light of history, totally to distrust Surrealist exegesis and to be certain of nothing except that the real aim is probably not what it seems.

Under the emotional strain of war, artist and critic must find detached criticism and self-criticism at its most difficult. The sense of horror and surprise at the discovery of a twisted and apparently unbenevolent universe are likely temporarily to warp the mind, and it is under such strain that Ceri Richard's fertile and ingenious brain, turning from the cool, objective interests which occupied him earlier, has produced in designs such as 'The Shrine' a volcanic eruption of symbols evolving no longer from normal physical reality but from inward emotion. Thus, as he explains in a letter to a friend, 'the curving walls' (curiously vermiform in shape, in contrast to his usual predilections) '... suggest by their unfolding curves acts of obeisance'. While he describes the 'Icon' itself with verbal symbolism as 'a resplendent explosive blossom-icon.' Indeed, from the initial gropings for the theme—'Totem', 'Fetish', 'Icon', 'Shrine', the design seems to have progressed with parallel verbal and visual images, isolated motives being gradually brought together—'collapsing walls ... that stand up firmly from the earth but sway out ... filled with rolling smoke ... like foliage'. And the final work embodies 'a great number of creative perambulations, where intuition is directed here and there—goodness knows what will be found—a marvellous and delicate flower, or a demon roaring in a squall'. And later he writes of 'the extraordinary but beautiful visual suggestions which so easily emerge from the (seemingly) arbitrary confluence of lines, shapes and ideas'.

Here the working of a Welsh imagination under the terrible and abnormal stimulus of enemy bombing is revealed. Possibly it is akin to the Welshman's executant passion in music in contrast to a relative sterility in formal creation, but in view of Richards' formidable draughtsmanship and early discipline, there is no doubt that he can, if he wishes, exert any necessary formal control. That he later will find it necessary, I am certain.

At present there is uneasiness in the different degrees of symbolization. They vary from the abstract patterning of which he is a virtuoso, to the casually descriptive foreshortening of the human figure. And, as noted above, his usually taut and muscular design is laid aside. Instead, delving in the caverns of his mind, he abandons spatial control for a kind of proliferation. Now poetic power results not so much from proliferation as from concision and, indeed, by a coalescing of images. 'Forests of the night' is a phrase hardly possible in prose, but one of great power in Blake's use, and later in the same poem (that is, in the working draft) the proliferating 'the arm, arm, grasp, clasp, dread grasp, clasp,' etc. are pruned until the symmetry of the verse is achieved, the formal needs obeyed and the utmost power thereby attained. Similarly, Beethoven: '... And then inside my head I begin to work it out ... and since I am conscious of what I am trying to do, I never lose sight of the fundamental idea. It ... grows before my eyes until I hear and see the image of it, moulded and complete, standing there before my mental vision'.

The further problem is whether art is not essentially lyrical; whether for the painter the ultimate meaning of red pigment is not inherent in its redness, being somewhat akin to a red flower, but less to a red flame; whether tragedy and horror are not extraneous to the principle of art; whether, for instance, the subject-matter of the Massacre of the Innocents is not in fact invisible, being overlaid for us by the grave, measured mind of Poussin.

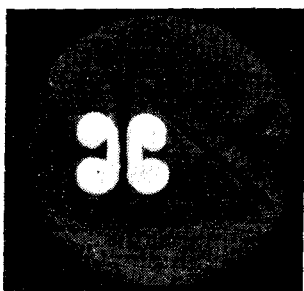
About 1939 the chance exoticism of costermonger's dress began to fascinate Ceri Richards, and the theme inspired many works. His earlier severity began to melt and break up in rococo exuberance, for the outward trappings were the theme, and the human element received no more than schematic indication. The legitimacy of this experiment may be felt if the queer problems of opera are considered. What, on reflection, should the figures be who are singing before the audience? What convention is visualized when the ear is attending to the conventions prepared for it, and the eye sees nothing? Not fleshy reality, which can be analogous only to sounds in nature or to casual conversation, but some equivalent of musical and poetic order, and, therefore, forms abstracted and rearranged by the visual artist. The amorous Don Giovanni, going with bravado to his doom, is no complete

human entity, but is, as it were, the toss of a cloak or the swing of a sword. Action and movement, analogous to progressing word and changing sound, there must be, but ideally some compendium of frill and furbelow should gyrate upon the stage and with true economy of means match libretto and score. The solution is conceivable because man's self-expression in dress is instinctive, age-long and universal, and therefore this bodying-forth of the human frame in varied extravagance of doublet, ruff, pantaloons, peruke, farthingale and monstrous head-dress, is the legitimate play of the artist. Thus, from a rare, contemporary flamboyance Ceri Richards in 'Façade' abstracts the baroque patternings of plume and pearl, allows them to burgeon elaborately, contrasts them with no more than an ocellate symbol, and with nice adjustment displays them on the quiet spaces of the background.

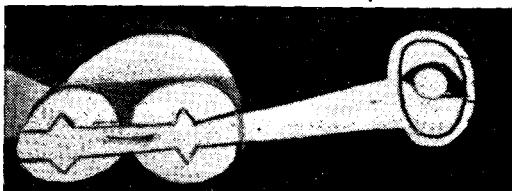
Less easy of assimilation is the recent 'Coconut Shy', a strange mixture of devices, and altogether an exceptional work whose ancestry would be difficult to trace. The nuclear forms swing and roll about the picture, turning sometimes in depth, as the drawing in the region of the shoulder-girdle reveals. Disparate mottlings and stripings so overlay this, however, that in the end the surface entirely dominates an extraordinarily dislocated and violent design. Nothing here is owed to Picasso, Picasso for whom the subjection of the visible world to the inexorable laws of the picture has ever been a principal concern. Nearer it certainly is to Ernst, but again, this picture proclaims not Ernst but Richards. Originality lies not in lack of ancestry. It is necessary only that, first, the work should be patently that of its author, and, second, that it should possess innate vitality. There is no virtue in continuing to murmur 'Perugino', but there is honour for him who first cries 'Raphael is here!'

In the spacious days when the London Group spangled the walls of enormous salons with works which more intimate surroundings might have shown to advantage, Ceri Richards produced a series of austere and large-scale decorations which, until they had been draped around with an olla podrida of easel-pictures, demonstrated in astounding fashion their capacity to compete by a species of emanation the filling of the still empty walls. Something new seemed to have appeared, something, perhaps, which hinted at the contemporary decoration for which, ever

since the drastic, functionalist purge, we have been waiting. To-day the problem is critical. In the vast re-building to which we are now committed (or doomed) the supersession of a style which ministers only to the body has become an urgent need. We have realized that although the function of the hand is reflected in the handle, always something beyond the function of the handle has been permitted which reflected something behind the hand. Nevertheless, the break is undeniable. The non-functional inventions of the Greeks, after an extraordinarily long period of fecundity, have lost their power, and by no fresh manipulations of withered leaves can life again be infused into repetitious vegetables. Only from a new source can the new ornament arrive, and only contemporary experiment, as its most passionate, may precipitate its symbols in a new geometry. In Richards' series of 'Constructions' this appeared to be happening. A development from flat *collage*, they are, essentially, low reliefs, or, rather, combinations of very varying degrees of relief, combinations also of materials in unexpected contrast, brought into the happiest agreement. Their vitality is due, however, to far more than decorative sensibility. A double use of paradox informs them. In the evocative sense, massive, whitened wood, sawn and shaped with consummate draughtsmanship, is realistically a vase and realistically a woman; in the material sense, bent and planished metal frankly is itself and at the same time is cast,



heavy brass. In inexhaustible variety, images of the outer world are passed through the artist's mind and emerge as new and vivid formulae. And such is the fullness of their content that the 'Constructions' demand in their surroundings unlimited silent spaces, and thus adapt themselves admirably to our only conjectural architecture. If indeed they are conceivably part of a new archi-



ture, they have an importance outside themselves. Athens, Florence or Chartres are greater in their connotation than the

separate works which compound them. In an authentic world-style the contribution of Picasso, Mirò and Ceri Richards would be components differing sufficiently only in racial flavour. Decoration elaborates the fabric of a building in appointed places, and the decoration must, as it were, be born of the fabric. All allusion outside the work itself must, as anciently, submit to strict control. Only ellipsis can satisfy the need for reticence. The sun, whose luminous activity is no longer to be deduced from fading yellow paint, is of more glorious substance, a disc of metal, shining in a sky of veritable marble, a device no newer than the pinning of flowery, tempera angels on a background of gold, but without part in the later illusory painting whose expression was an unvarying web of oily pigment.

No danger lurks if the material expression is not an end in itself, but is a visible sign of spiritual meaning. The restless vitality of Ceri Richards will permit no relapse. His art will renew itself by self-propagation. Sometimes, no doubt, he will look towards the Continent for sustenance, but with English artists he has no perceptible affinity. Nor, with his sense of self-sufficiency, does zeal for a common cause tend to move him to excited participation in any English 'movement'. Rather, he prefers, with the Welshman's dramatic instinct, to remain, as by nature, the centre of the drama. Critic and patron, whose favours his extreme independence never allows him to seek, must accept what he offers. His unwavering, almost naïve faith in his vision allows of no deviation from a self-appointed course. Ceri Richards is, in short, a serious artist, and accordingly has had the reception kept for serious artists in this country: he has not been taken seriously.

At a dark moment of the war he arranged a considerable exhibition of his work in London, no easy or inexpensive enterprise in those days. Our most pontifical journal gave it an ill-natured and derisory notice. By mischance the critic betrayed his ignorance of an artist who was no newcomer to London exhibitions by attributing to him the wrong sex. Thus it became necessary to occupy in apology more space than had previously been given to criticism. What vague linguistic memories had stirred in an indolent mind it is not possible to guess. Here it may be recorded that the name 'Ceri', like him who bears it, is Welsh, and that in the admirably phonetic Welsh language 'c' is always hard, as in *Cymru*.

SELECTED NOTICES

A Haunted House. By Virginia Woolf. Hogarth Press, 7s. 6d.

Fireman Flower. By William Sansom. Hogarth Press, 8s. 6d.

Lunatic Broth. By H. A. Manhood. Jonathan Cape, 8s. 6d.

Sailor's Song. By James Hanley. Nicholson & Watson. 8s. 6d.

The Little Locksmith. By Katharine Butler Hathaway. (Faber & Faber. 8s. 6d.)

Let us Now Praise Famous Men. By James Agee and Walker Evans. (Houghton Mifflin Company. \$3.50.)

AMONG the sweet-sellers at every Burmese *pwe* there used to be a man whose principal piece of apparatus was an inconspicuous little pipe. From this disarmingly simple object he would sooner or later start blowing into space a hair-thin thread of spun sugar which, continually coiling and wreathing upon itself, would miraculously construct, first a web, then an ever-enlarging ball of indescribable light complexity, a vast sort of airy bolus, evolving improbably out of the slender pipe. That intricate and insubstantial creation, not to everybody's taste certainly, but floating with such an entrancing unearthly shimmer upon the air, seems to bear a resemblance to the work of Virginia Woolf. There is the same fascinating elaboration of detail, threads laced and interwoven so subtly that their mazy ramifications have an air of fortuitousness, the same luminous lustre which never coarsens into transplendence or glitter, the same elusive charmed quality. The prosaic substance of everyday woven into the lovely, fragile mysteriousness of dream.

For the working of this sorcery time and space are required. It is necessary that the spun sugar magic should have room to display its delicate architecture as well as sufficient leisure for its fabrication. So it follows that Virginia Woolf's peculiar genius does not find fullest expression in the form of the short story. The short story is like a small room in which is concentrated a brilliant light, unfavourable to the binding of elaborate spells.

A Haunted House contains some stories written over twenty years ago and some later ones, including six which have not been printed before. They are delightful; Virginia Woolf is always delightful. But they are not her best work: although the last story of all called *A Summing Up* lets the reader see her most powerful magic at work, her self-identification, not only with people, but with non-human things of all sorts from red-flushed clouds to a bucket over a wall, her dreaming within herself of the dream of the world, the dream that is good, and bad, and both at the same time. And perhaps this story sums up her own attitude, the detachment which at first appears contradictory, but is really only the inevitable dissociation of dreamer from dream, when she calls the soul a widow bird, by nature unmated and perched aloof on a tree.

William Sansom breaks the spell of Virginia Woolf's gentle, nostalgic haunting with a harsher magic of his own. It's no spun sugar witchcraft that he deals in but the much more frightening and much less gracious enchantment of the psychological hinterland, the 'labs where puzzled Kafkas meet the inexplicable defeat, the odd behaviour of the law, the facts which suddenly withdraw'.

Some of the stories in *Fireman Flower* are realistic, but most of them take one into that dangerous territory of dream symbolism where all laws are incomprehensible, all authorities incalculable; where the hidden threat feeds in every rose and all simplicity hides the ominous complication.

It is a grim and terrifying place, this country of the peach-house and the phallic forbidden lighthouse, made more alarming still by the apparently straightforward, matter-of-fact way in which it is described.

Mr. Sansom writes exceedingly well. Such stories as *The Witnesses* and *The Long Sheet* produce through their restrained, detailed, documentary treatment a disturbing effect of realism which leaves upon the reader the impression of an objective account of an actual, rather than an imaginary, horror situation.

The intellectual experience of reading these stories is so exciting that one does not at once examine their symbolism very closely. When the question of interpretation arises, the allegories seem rather obscure. The ideology is hard to follow and one begins to wonder whether the author himself has a clearcut picture of that castle of truth where we are all 'denied permission ever to reside'. The book is fascinating anyhow.

After reading *A Haunted House* and *Fireman Flower* there is a danger of being unfair to H. A. Manhood's collection of short stories. In *Lunatic Broth* he prescribes the mixture as before. His sketches contain all the classic country ingredients: the picturesque, the bizarre, the pathetic, the broad, the humorous, the cozy, the faintly sinister; artfully shaken up with an engaging individual flavour, as when a salmon is seen 'hanging high in the back of the shop with a great bunch of parsley, as if they were waiting to be married'.

All the stories are competent. Some are very short. Some, such as *The Black Angel*, in which a dying boy finds fulfilment and self-expression through mastering the doctor's broken-down car, are quite moving.

In small doses *Lunatic Broth* is a mild stimulant: too much taken at once destroys its effectiveness.

James Hanley is a peculiar writer, and it is not easy to say anything about *Sailor's Song* except that it is unlikely to be liked by anyone who has no intuitive feeling for the sea's tragic appeal.

The sea is the whole theme of the book, and man's relationship to the sea.

In spite, rather than because of his curious technique, Mr. Hanley gets across an impression of violent intensity. Yes, I think, tragic intensity.

The Little Locksmith, by Katherine Butler Hathaway, is not an easy book to describe or to fit into any category. Its heroine, presumably, is the writer's self, who suffers in childhood a long and severe illness resulting in a physical disability which causes her to feel a secret link between herself and the little deformed locksmith who comes to wind the clocks in her home.

Looking into a mirror when she is first able to get up from bed, feeling inside 'like a healthy, ordinary, lucky person', she sees, looking back at her with shame, eyes that are her own eyes indeed, and yet so nearly the eyes of that little locksmith 'with the awful strange peak in his back and his cross, unapproachable sadness'.

Here then is the beginning of her predicament. Her whole life is infected by the injury her body has suffered, as if a wicked step-mother had cast over her

some hideous disguise, so that she must 'wander stupidly and blindly, following fantastically wrong clues', in search of a charm that can set her free.

The search leads finally to her adventure island, to the house 'calm and still and beautiful as a work of art', where her favourite magic of transformations works to a triumphant climax and she is no longer 'the brilliant woman disguised as a little oddity', but one of those people, 'civilized in the highest sense', who have looked up and seen the truth, 'the miraculous, and the most precious thing in the world, without which we perish'.

This book is very unusual, sensitive, and appealing; the writing cultivated, graceful and delicate: it might be described as a study in imaginative introversion.

It may seem unprofitable to write about a book which cannot be obtained in this country, but I particularly want to mention *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, by James Agee and Walker Evans. I want to say something about the book because of its intrinsic value and also because it seems desirable to draw attention to the fact that so significant a piece of work finds no publisher over here.

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men is the result of a collaboration between two young Americans, a writer and a photographer, who, after working together for five years, have produced between them a unique and horrifying book.

The book is a study in words and pictures of three Alabama 'poor white' tenant families. After that bald statement of its contents the English reader may ask: Why should this interest me? Why should I, struggling through the morass of a total war, concern myself with the troubles of a group of peasants thousands of miles away on another continent?

The answer is that the problem raised is universal, not regional, and of the utmost urgency to us all. It is a terrifying fact that the post-war world will be full of damaged and helpless human beings with whose fate, if any values are to survive, the whole human race must realize itself involved. Any representation, any experiment whatsoever, which may shock people into awareness of their responsibility to these undefended ones is of supreme importance. The ethical value of this book can hardly be exaggerated in that it tends, by disturbing the reader's emotional norm, to force upon him acknowledgement of his own profound implication in the matter.

As a creative work it is extremely moving. James Agee is not an easy writer for English readers. His technique of detailed cataloguing, poetical elaboration of language, etc. will seem unfamiliar. He is a writer who believes that words, more than the instruments of any other art, can be made to do or tell anything within human concept, and that they produce their most telling effects through the help of 'art devices' which he, 'being at least in part an "artist"', is incapable of avoiding; although he is in this work 'illimitably more interested in life than in art'.

The outcome of his 'effort in human actuality' is a beautiful, strange and violent book of which Evans' extraordinary photographs form an integral part. In the cultural as well as the social interest English people should be given a chance of reading it.

ANNA KAVAN

CORRESPONDENCE

THE CASE OF BILL WILLIAMS

Sir,

I was mildly interested in the case of B. Williams but cannot understand why in the case of such an obviously sane and normal individual the attentions of psychiatrists should be solicited. It is the man who falls in with and dovetails completely into 'society' who needs psychiatric adjustment. The key-note and hall-mark of the neurotic is his stubborn aversion from the simple and obvious solution to the chief problems in his life. All societies are neurotic, all politics spurious and all history a burlesque. Man will not be truly civilized until the state becomes merely a *convenience*.

Yours, etc.,
GEORGE RICHARDS

Dear Sir,

I am Bill Williams. I have no desire to enlarge upon the case as already presented. My purpose is to indicate precisely how we loose-ended mortals are dealt with and ultimately disposed of by Army Neurosis Centres.

I am compelled to avoid statistics. I may not even hint at their proportions. This is lamentable. Figures are unromantic to the casual reader but I feel sure they would prove of interest to the readers of HORIZON. I can, however, state with safety that the number of cases of neurosis being dealt with at these centres today is considerable.

Before a soldier can see a psychiatrist he has to be considered a psychiatric case by his unit M.O. Here lies the first stumbling block. There are far too many M.Os. of the old die-hard school who look upon Mist. Expect. as the panacea for all ills, and upon a man without physical ailment as a malingerer: who order hot fomentations for a deformed foot and who consider the granting of permission to refrain from wearing gaiters an important step towards curing hammer-toes. This may sound farcical but it is all too true, as anyone who has lived in close contact with Army routine will well know. I do not wish to decry the splendid work being done by the R.A.M.C. I refer to those comparatively few mumbo-jumbo practitioners who would do well to put feathers in their hair and set up business as 'medicine men'. To support my remarks I would quote cases of men passed as A1 on attestation and down-graded to category C within a few months of their enrolment, having suffered no ailments extraneous to their customary complaints. This must surely be indicative of the slap-happy state of inefficiency of the examining Medical Boards. If a case of mild neurosis, attempting to see a psychiatrist, runs against an M.O. of this type he is likely to meet with little success. Furthermore a great percentage of the neurotics of low mental intelligence are ignorant that such a specialist exists and are quite unaware that Psychiatry as a science is legally within their reach and able to do much for them. Where many have been unsuccessful in getting past the unit M.O. I was fortunate and within three weeks of my application to see a psychiatrist I was being admitted to Hospital X. It is of this Hospital X that I wish to write.

Patients at Hospital X consist of Officers, W.O.s, N.C.O.s. and men. For the better part they come from the A.A. gun and searchlight regiments but all units are represented. Intelligence Corps, Pay Corps, Tanks, Infantry, Parachutes

(strongly represented), Recce. Corps, and numerous other arms that constitute the Army of today. There are too, a number of patients who have been on active service in the more fierce theatres of war. These appear to be suffering from a neurosis resultant from strenuous action and physical wounds. With these I am not concerned. Neither am I concerned with the homosexual who abounds, nor the nocturnal bedwetter. I am concerned only with the subject matter of Anna Kavan's article. Bill Williams and parallel cases.

The procedure at Hospital X is briefly this. On admission the first three days are spent in being physically examined by a specialist. Blood tests, painless and simple; water test, simple and a trifle embarrassing, perhaps a dozen or so oddly assorted patients sitting at a table in the laboratory with their specimens in measuring glasses before them. A multi-coloured array of the clear and cloudy. Comes a short interview with the chief psychiatrist who segregates the various types of complaints and allots them to the appropriate ward and psychiatrist. Once the patient is established in his ward his treatment begins. He has interviews almost every day. He is either talked to and encouraged to talk about himself, hypnotised or, if he appears not to be co-operating, drugged with what is commonly called the 'truth drug'.

In the time allowed by the Army authorities the patient cannot be completely psycho-analysed and adjusted to all forms of life, this, a psychiatrist of my acquaintance tells me, takes two to three years. The intention of the hospital is to avoid the unnecessary discharge from the Army of men who might be used in other jobs. In other words since they cannot make the man fit the job they endeavour to find a job to fit the man. This usually takes the form of a posting to another unit under War Office Authority which states the conditions and employment of his future service. The unit's Officer Commanding to send a written report on his subsequent behaviour at the end of three months. If a man has been troubled with domestic worries he is posted, if possible, near his home so that he might be able to get to his family frequently. His time at the hospital has been spent in stimulating P.T., prescribed according to his physical abilities. Congenial pastimes and hobbies and entertainment have been plentiful. After a period of approximately twelve weeks he leaves the hospital assumed to be symptom-free and goes to join his new unit and try again.

At this point the taxpayer will probably say that this is indeed a good institution, beneficial to the community. The psychiatrist leans back in his chair and stops biting his nails or doodling—they all appear to have some nervous tic—and feels that he is doing a tremendous job of work. Raising the standard of *Mens sana in corpore sano* amongst the modern soldiers and increasing the war effort. But here lies the question. Are the successes as great as they think? Do they perhaps attach too much significance to the further reports submitted by Officers Commanding? Are they aware that these reports with very few exceptions are concocted by clerks and signed by the Officer after a brief perusal in which he evinces little interest? These prosaic pieces of persiflage are worth nothing.

I am prepared to concede the point that many cases find their niche and settle down in their new positions. I know of quite a few. But can I also quote some other cases of which I know. Of cases who are looked upon by their immediate superiors as mentally deficient because they are labelled as neurotic. Who are not considered worthy of trust or promotion because of their neurosis.

Who suffer further frustration as a direct result of this distrust. Who become the laughing-stock of the semi-educated office staff who titter in girlish groups—for they know, they have access to medical history sheets farcically stamped confidential and containing relevant details of the patient's analysis, couched in terms which convey nothing to their meagre comprehension but satisfy them that he is 'queer'. Contempt, indifference and mockery are surely the most dangerous enemies of the unstable? But these unhappy cases who feel that it is useless going all through it again, only to suffer the same treatment at the hands of their own confederates go blindly on, a danger to themselves, lost like Bill Williams, in the limbo of the unwanted. Surely I know. I am Bill Williams.

P. G. BYRNE

Dear Sir,

Nothing 'is to be done with the incorrigible and undesirable individuality of Bill Williams'. The answer for Bill comes only from himself.

For: the nurse, the psychiatrist and Mr. Brown, Mrs. Smith and you, we are all Bill Williams. The only difference consists in that he is wider awake to the conflict of our time and therefore suffers . . . already. He *knows* that his hyacinth has withered whilst others are only just talking about it.

Because man's love towards the world 'has not survived' (has it ever been properly born yet, I wonder) he turned mechanical. The creation of the mechanical age is a necessary step for man's development. The exteriorizing of the mechanical in man frees spiritual energies and dynamics which have not yet found their expression in a positive sense. Would you agree with me that Bill Williams's suffering is the attempt of those spiritual forces to find their form, their symbol which is greater and wider than B. W. himself?

If so, listen to him and he will tell you that the time of collective spiritual values is dying; they are being replaced by mechanical ones. The Bill Williams of our time exist because we are experiencing the greatest and most profound reversal in history: *That which has been collective*, namely our spiritual and religious outlook on life, *is becoming individual*. ('Christ within us' becomes an *individual* and a necessary *experience*, because a mere belief does not satisfy any longer!) *That which has been individual*, namely the material aspect of life (capitalism) *is becoming collective* (socialism, science, mechanization).

The Bill Williams of today have not yet found that inner order which frees the individual spirit. They have not found themselves yet, but suffer the loss of the supporting collective spiritual values. They have not experienced the spirit that makes the individual scent and flower and thus prevents life from becoming one vast omnipotent machine.

In Private Williams's neurosis, in your dreams and visions and nightmares there speaks the 'hyacinth' that asks to live and to give meaning to Bill's life and yours. In other words the experience of an individual spirituality is the answer to the collective machine at the moment. It can only be born out of oneself. As a psychotherapist one has to know the art of listening and how to give the 'hyacinth' time and understanding to show itself and to develop. The answer—which is the cure—comes only from Bill Williams himself, it satisfies the conflict individual-versus-society by giving both their due.

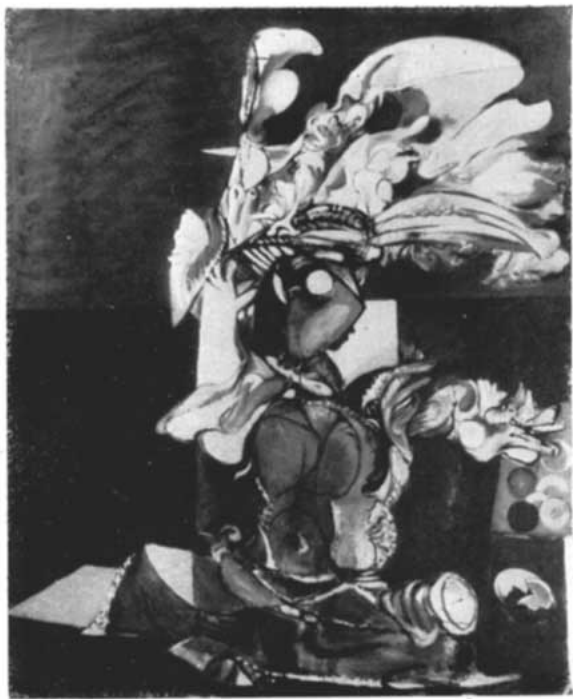
Yours, etc.,
H. WESTMANN



CERI RICHARDS. *The Shrine*. Drawing. 1941. (Coll. Colin Anderson)



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Façade. 1940.

(Coll. Mrs. Rubin)

Costerwoman. 1941





Two females.
Painted Construction. 1938

Woman feathering
a bird. 1939



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